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LEAVES FROM A HUNTING DIARY IN ESSEX.

Frances Evelyn Warwick

LEAVES

FROM

A HUNTING DIARY

IN

ESSEX

BY

H. BEAUCHAMP YERBURGH

("McADAM")

"And plainly as the field moves off
In a still lengthening line,
Now might 'McADAM' note the names
Destined in print to shine."

Lay of Matching Green, 1883, by R. Y. BEVAN.

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Barrington Hall

LEAVES FROM A HUNTING DIARY

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Barrington Hall—Lady Warwick and her Horses—Goldfinch and Athboy—A Small Field—How about those Greens?—Horsefrith Park—R. Y. Bevan—P. S. Lee—Xmas Greetings—David Christy, Junr.—Maybelle—David Christy, Senr.—There are worse things than a blank day—Ford Barclay—Snap Shot—Safety in Numbers—The Cream of the thing—Sheila—George Hart on the Knight—Quick Wood—Fyfield, 28th December, 1895—R. J. Dunlop on Peggy—The Great Run from Forest Hall—The Osiers—Keep a bit up Your Sleeve—Over the Ford—The Die is Cast—The Race for Blake Hall—Half the Hounds—The Pick of the Basket—Mr. Bevan Plumps for the Kissing Gate—Hospitality at Marden Ash—Up-wind to Marles—The pace ultra—Duck Wood—Mr. Avila holds up his Hat—The Indications of a Good Run—J. G. Pelly and his hunter Snowstorm—A Second Run—A Rough Line—A Broken Collar Bone—After one of Mr. Bury's Foxes—A Fall over Timber—The Handy Doctor—Moreton—The Surprise Packet—General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C.—Vagabond.

THE Countess of Warwick made her mark in the hunting field in Essex as Lady Brooke, and gained experiences that were of considerable service to her when, to the regret of all who hunted with the Essex Hounds, she gave up hunting in her native county, and went to live at Warwick Castle and ride with the world-famed Warwickshire Hounds.

Lady Warwick and her horses were a match. Look at the picture of the priceless "Goldfinch," a favourite hunter, for which she once refused a thousand pounds, or the lovely "Athboy," and you'll ken the kind of animals she rode. Half a ton* was a common figure for her to give for a horse, though she secured "Lord Melbourne," a lop-eared black that I well remember persuading my brother, R. Yerburgh, to purchase from Darby, of Rugby, for a trifle below that sum, when the

* According to Captain Tip Top, a ton = £1,000.—Ed.

horse was sold by auction at Leicester, and I have heard that Lady Warwick never regretted the purchase.

Riding good horses, she made good use of them, and when hounds ran fast in Essex she was generally seen in the front: in the words of the late Sir Charles Mordaunt and the Hon. and Rev. W. R. Verney, authors of the soul-stirring "Annals of the Warwickshire Hunt," we learn that in 1892 "Lady Warwick is a very strong and bold horsewoman, and the horse has to go when she puts it at a fence."

The Countess of Warwick's "Goldfinch"

From a painting by Lynwood Palmer

Monday, Blackmore, the 9th.—The smallest field on record, not twenty at the meet, never two score all day. The reason not far to seek. A dense fog, which showed no signs of lifting at 9 a.m., sent all City men to town. Willingale had played havoc with the one-horse brigade, and Blackmore, in this young season, has already acquired an unenviable notoriety for the paucity of its foxes. Why and wherefore, who knows? The place used to swarm with them. Col. Arkwright's covert at Thoby was once a sure find.

Perfectly sick of the whole thing. Blackmore blank, Lady Grove tenantless, Col. Disney's coverts unoccupied by a single member of the vulpine fraternity, Writtle Park a sealed book, for the shooters have not yet had their say. At 2.15 we bade adieu to the chase, and good night to all those who had for a moment been betrayed into a gallop by the sight of a yellow cat at Thoby, and steered our way from Fryerning, several gates having to be opened and shut before the high road was gained. To this, and this alone, we owed our salvation, for by the time we had cleared

the farm buildings and elicited from a man pulping roots the nearest and shortest cut to Blackmore, hounds could be seen just entering Fryerning Wood; and hearing that Horsefrith Park would be taken as a forlorn hope, we luckily, as the sequel will show, held on, otherwise it would have been a case of "came out too late on Saturday" and "left too soon on Monday" —a double-barrel that would effectually have choked us off foxhunting for a month.

"How about those greens?" said Jack to the huntsman, as he was unfastening the straw band that held the gate near Horsefrith Park, pointing at the same time to some very likely-looking cabbages on the opposite side of the lane. "And a very likely place, too," said Mr. David Christy. Certainly they were a splendid crop, affording ample covert. But no, it

The Countess of Warwick's "Athboy" by "Ascetic"
From a Painting by Lynwood Palmer
Winner 1st Prizes, Richmond, Royal Show, Leicester and Peterborough, 1896

was not to be, and so to Horsefrith Park and then home was the order. Following young Mr. Marriage through his father's farm, we had barely passed it before we heard Bailey's yack! yack! as hounds opened in covert. "Keep him up," shouted the huntsman, and crack went half-a-dozen thongs as we galloped the grass field on the Blackmore side. But this was no Blackmore fox, but a real stout customer, who was not to be baulked of his line, and Jack was already over the fence under the tree, screaming his lustiest, as the big dog hounds, fresh as if only just out of kennel, tore across the first big stubble field. Two fences, as blind as your hat and as dark as Erebus, and we jumped into and crossed the first of the six or seven roads and lanes we had to negotiate during the thirty minutes the gallop lasted over the cream of the country, taking in a lot of sound grass. Touching Spain's Wood, four miles to that point, they left Screens Park on the left, and two miles further on lost their fox at Moor Wood, Roxwell.

Fast at first and slow at the end, it was a most enjoyable gallop, and amply rewarded all those who had borne the burden and heat of the day—fourteen all told, saw the finish—Mr. R. Y. Bevan (who, in the absence of both masters, was in charge for the day), Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. P. S. Lee, Mr. L. Marriage, junr., Messrs. E. and D. Christy, Mr. Gosling, Mr. Craig, Mr. Gibson, Messrs. Carr (two), Mr. Hollebone, a gentleman on a bay, Major and Mrs. Ricardo and Mrs. Upton. During the run it was a perfect treat to see the keen way in which young Mr. Marriage rode to hounds on a marvellously clever little bay, and some very funny fences had to be negotiated, I can assure you, for the gates didn't lie handy when we crossed the roads and lanes. This is the second time quite recently that a fox has been found in his father's covert, which is scarce a stone's throw from the house.

Roland Yorke Bevan

The Poet Laureate of the Hunt and the popular Hunt Secretary in the year 1897, which office he has held, in conjunction with Mr. Tyndale White, for many years, is one of the most popular as he has been in his time one of the hardest riders with the Essex Hounds. Kind-hearted and generous to a degree, he has done a good deal for hunting in Essex, and

had he possessed a long enough purse, would have made a most excellent Master of Hounds, for he has the tact of an M.P. Mr. Bevan never passes anyone on the way home from hunting without raising his hat or saying "good night."

Sired by "Fetherlock," Gladys was the best hunter ever owned by Mr. Lee, and for three seasons 1889 to 1891, she carried him most brilliantly to the front. No run was too long for her, no fence too big, and when hounds ran into their fox whoever else might be missing it was certainly not Mr. Lee and his mare "Gladys."

Philip S. Lee and his mare "Gladys"

Christmas Greetings.—We would gladly have deferred these until the boys come home from school, but the frost set in heartily on Tuesday night and robbed us all of a great day's sport in the environs of Down Hall. The roads were like iron, the hedges frosted with silver rime, as we drove meetwards, confident in the old adage that one day's frost never stopped hunting. Outside the Green Man, Harlow, were grouped several frozen-out fox-hunters of such lugubrious mien that we began to think that the

frost must have done its work. At Hatfield Heath things were more cheerful, the grass was soft and the hedges beginning to drip, so we waited with quiet confidence for the appearance of hounds at 12, and could not believe our ears, when one of the staff rode up with the news that hounds were not coming. Not coming! why not? was echoed on all sides, but the reason was apparent as we returned to Harlow, for there the frost remained as bad as ever, though three miles further south the country was perfectly safe for horse and hounds—and this is the beginning of our mild winter.

David Christy, Junr., on "Maybelle"

I have never seen a Christy on a bad horse, or known a Christy who was a bad horseman. Here we have another portrait of a good man on a good animal (a five-year-old). Son of Mr. David Christy, of Stanford Hall, about the oldest follower of the Essex Hounds, he takes after his father in his love of hounds, but perhaps cares more for stag-hunting than his father ever did. He generally has a young 'un on hand, and "Maybelle" is a specimen of one that he has bred and made himself. By "Chelwood," by "Rosicrucian," dam a

hunting mare, "Maybelle" is a red chestnut with four white legs: she won many prizes before she was five years old, beating at the Bath and West of England Show at St. Albans in 1896 a horse that won first prize, in a class of seventy, at the Dublin Show. She is an excellent hunter.

Mr Christy may fairly lay claim to having hunted as long as if not longer than, any present follower of the Essex Hounds.

David Christy, Senr., on "Brian Boru"

Commencing with Conyers fifty-nine years ago, when he was sixteen years of age, he has hunted ever since. Mr. Christy says that he never rode a better horse than "Brian Boru," the subject of this photograph. Purchased in Ireland as a two-year-old in 1888, he carried his new owner's son Theodore the following season: when a four-year-old Mr. Christy took him in hand to be carried safely and well for many a subsequent season.

All who read the following lines, describing the first day upon which the Frost Fiend laid his cruel grip on the land, will recognise the poetic inspiration that breathes through them as the work of a master-hand — the hand, indeed, of no other than the Laureate of our Hunt :

There were fifty horsemen vainly waited,
Booted and spurred for the fray ;
There were thirty ladies' bright eyes fated
To fill with tears that day.

There were eighty nags, fit, strong, and supple,
Ready to go for dear life ;
There were trim little bitches—twenty couple—
All keen and sharp as a knife.

There were foxes reading "No admission,"
On their earths at early morn,
In anxious fear and alert condition,
Expecting the sound of the horn.

The orb of day was brightly burning,
Though millions of miles away,
Hoar frost to verdure quickly turning
His mighty noontide ray.

There was one little word so softly spoken,
When we queried, "Shall we go ?"
So softly, the silence scarce was broken,
And that little word was "No."

But that short word proved immensely stronger
Than all things else beside ;
It bids us not to tarry longer,
But humbly homeward ride.

In vain the south wind gently sighing,
In vain shines forth Apollo ;
Untrod to-day the fields are lying,
To-day we hear no "Halloa !"

A fire, though small, great matter kindleth,
Prolific of words that word ;
As the crowd of hapless horsemen dwindleth,
Sounds loud and deep are heard.

Fog seems again to densely darken
Above the blasted heath.
Bad words, to which 'tis sin to hearken,
Fall thick on the ground beneath.

Forgiven, forgot, all such to-morrow ;
Like the frost of yesternight,
Shall pass away all thoughts of sorrow
In that hour supremely bright.

When eye the welcome vision cheereth
Of the flying lady pack,
And ear their sweetest music heareth,
On the breezes wafted back.

Friday and Saturday hounds were out, but nothing worth repeating at second hand came of it. A blank day from Dagenham on Monday, December 16th, is almost a blank page in one's diary, for what can you write about so uninviting a topic, though the philosophic temperament may extract a few grains of comfort ? The smell of the woods, the splash

of the rain, is better far than the fog and smoke of London Town. The compulsory fast does you no harm either, for we have not yet gone in for the shooter's lunch. No need for electric baths (which the doctors say are so good for enlarged hearts) when you have the electric shock of half-a-dozen false alarms peculiar to any blank day.

Who led the rush at Loughton Shaws, which swept us along with irresistible force only to find Bailey quietly jogging along in front of his hounds, everyone trying to look as if he hadn't done it—the wish in every case the father of the thought that set the machinery in motion. Oh for the enthusiasm of the Trinity youth* who voted the two jumps between Loughton Shaws and the Theydon-road the best thing of the whole day. I could not agree, but would not deny him. Nay, rather the instinctive timorousness belonging to middle-age sought other consolation in the leisurely march across country, affording as it did such good insight of the best way in and quickest way out of many a covert to be treasured up for future use.

Even on a blank day you must jump occasionally, but young Mr. Tyndale White and old Mr. New (nothing disrespectful, you know) managed to find a useful short cut into Hainault Forest *en route* to the COLONEL'S coverts, and missed the trappy bank with ditch beyond which brought several to grief on our previous visit. A good many eyed the Colonel's black rails in a hungry manner when the lock of the gate failed to yield to the blows from a stirrup iron. Mr. Mugleston went so far as to say that his cob would do them. Regard for his neck, to say nothing of the rails, repressed the rising inclination to ask for ocular demonstration, for if, as Stella says in the play of "Mrs. Ponderbury's Past," "Men are men in the country," in these days of barbed wire rails are rails, not to be larked over with impunity when hounds are not running.

Perhaps the best thing of the whole day was the bold bid Mr. C. E. Green, who in the absence of Mr. Arkwright was in charge, made to save it. Loughton Shaws blank; at 3 p.m. he gave the order Weald Coppice. It didn't come off, but if it had, one, and one lady only, would have been there to tell the tale, Miss Margaret Green. Luckily blank days are few and far between in our country, otherwise our hounds would soon become as wild as hawks.

We are undoubtedly having all our best sport on Wednesdays.

Take Wednesday, December 18th, at Epping Green. What a merry day it was, probably affording more enjoyment to more people than any other day this season. I don't think I came across man or woman, boy or maiden, who had not enjoyed at least one of the three runs which fell to our share. For they all like a romp on the grass, and we romped on the grass all day.

So quick did hounds get away with the first fox from Nasing Coppice that thirty or forty of us were left badly behind, and had not Mr. Arkwright been very quick of hearing we might all very easily have shared the same fate, for the hounds were not in covert a minute before they were away at the bottom and running like smoke, and then, swinging up hill to the farm, checked in the corner, and checked again near the farm buildings. A man on the hill waving his arm in the direction the fox had taken gave Bailey the cue, and they raced for Deer Park, throwing everyone hopelessly out who held to the right. Leaving Shatter Bushes behind, they sunk the hill for the brook, by which time the field were somewhat spread-eagled, the bungle Mr. Price made at the gate helping to do it.

* Mr. R. Bury.

Mr. C. E. Green, with a strong lead on the left, and a grey coat on the right, caught my eye as we splashed through the ford, just beyond which hounds made a curious loop in a ploughed field, the fox having evidently run up and down a couple of furrows to see if he could shake off the dogs.

Not a bit of it, though it gave time for mutual recognition of father and son. What a fine fencer "Snap Shot" is! Out of the lane and up the park the fast ones were leading, and again the grey-coated one could be seen in front as he bored his way through a stiff fence into the road, where all, save Mr. Barclay, who got through with a fall, were hopelessly wedged.

Ford Barclay

This is another of the excellent photographs taken by Mr. Arthur Bowlby of a good man on a good horse in '98. Mr. Barclay has ridden this mare for several seasons with the Essex Hounds, and as he rides at least fifteen stone, and rides in the first flight with the keenest feather weights, it says something for the mare's pace and stamina. Mr. Barclay has had one or two nasty falls in his time, but they don't stop him, and the fence has yet to be made that will do so either.

when there is a screaming scent and the usual lot have settled into their usual places. Mr. Barclay has done a lot of big game shooting, and has made his mark as a pigeon shot: he is a welcome gun at a big shoot, as in addition to being a good shot he is as genial a companion as one could possibly meet with in camp or at covert side.

"How did you all get through that thick hedge, my dear friends?" I left you kicking your heels into your panting steeds, and you didn't seem to have a jump left between you, and sought an outlet elsewhere, by gap and gate, and didn't we hammer-and-tongs it, Mr. Oldham, down to the lodge gates at Copped Hall? Another check, by all that's tenacious! Time to here twenty minutes, Mrs. Price's horse obstinately refusing the double; in another five minutes we were in the Warren, and a man was under his horse as he turned turtle over some rails that led into the Warren, and it took five men to extricate him. From here the hounds ran clear away from the whole field, racing their fox through the Forest to ground in the main earths at Luffmans.

Beech Hill Park—which is the way? queried the Master of a forest-born sportsman. Clattering through the stable yard we met the owner, faultlessly got up, not a speck of mud on his boots. From Obelisk Wood we trusted to the guidance of Squire Colvin for the short cut to his own covert, and a certain find. Safety in numbers, you say, or surely Bailey would have killed one of the *Five Foxes in Galley Hills*. Were you one of the lucky few who really got away on terms with hounds when they finally left Galley Hills, and running through Deer Park, *viâ* Nasing Coppice, lost their fox near Orange Wood? Or were you one of the many unfortunates, like myself, who had to ride a ding-dong race with hounds always a field or two to the good until they divided near Nasing Coppice? Jumping out of Epping Long Green, the Master was nearly pulled off his horse, but it was the shortest cut to hounds in and out of that belt of trees. We all voted this a jolly gallop, and all save the huntsman were glad that a fox, who knew such a good line of country, escaped. Mr. Waters, who had ridden every yard of the line, viewed the fox not a field ahead when hounds threw up.

But a little tit-bit, a sparkling *bonne bouche*, was in reserve for those—and their name is not legion—who never go home before hounds. Twenty minutes by the watch and a kill! The Mate tried to discount it riding home; *said he could have thrown a stone as far as hounds ran*. But when hounds are out of sight, piercing their way through thick thorn fences which run up the slopes of grassy hills, you want to be very close to them to know where they have been. Why, the find in the grey twilight in the last little spinney on the side of the hill at the rear of the straggling cottages of Nasing was well worth a sovereign. Which side would he break? Of course, we went the wrong one, and hounds were tearing along over the grass, but swinging left-handed to the Common, and parallel with the road, down which we all clattered. Running with more dash and devilry than they had shown all day, you knew hounds meant killing. Close at their fox, they turned back with him at the Common, and they nearly nabbed him by the side of the brook.

And now came *the cream of the thing*, my boy! Over the brook at all hazards you were bound to go. The Master was under his horse in the deep, watery gully that led into it, but with ready help around him, and better still, clear of his horse, as Mr. Willie Sewell, sliding his clever

chestnut mare, "Sheila," down a precipitous bank, leapt lightly over the deep, dark pool at the bottom, closely followed by Mr. Bevan, we could hear the maddening chorus of hounds come tinkling back, as we sped up the hill and flew the bank at the top, where luckily Jack, who had kept the right side of the brook, was in evidence, and in time to shout, "'Ware wire!" For the light was failing fast, and wire was barely distinguishable as fence after fence was taken. Down to the plantation at the bottom of Low Hill hounds forced their fox, and then took a turn to the right. In vain the Admiral tried the gate as hounds flew up the grassy slope. Near the top of the hill they hovered for a moment, before swinging themselves round in a beautiful cast, recovered the line, and tore on over the road, and close at their fox, dashed into the spinneys at the back of Nasing House, when for a few seconds we lost sight of them.

The huntsman now came galloping up, and recovering his hounds, made the ground good beyond the house, some men at work in the gardens getting a view of the fox stealing through the shrubberies. Bailey laid the hounds on; one circle round, one dash into the big kitchen garden with a 20ft. wall round it, and it was U P for Master Reynard, for Bailey was off his horse and closed the door in the garden wall, and only he and his satellites witnessed the execution, the public not being admitted. But this fox wanted killing, for he had already run up some tremendous poultry bills and he had had a very good innings since we ran him, you'll remember, in the early days of cubbing. It was a right merry finish to a right good day, and Mrs. Willie Sewell, the only lady up, fairly deserved the brush, which the Master gave her.

During the day we were pleased to see Major and Mrs. Carter out, but were sorry that the military cloak concealed a broken collar-bone. But if the Major will go jumping railway gates down in Warwickshire, what can he expect?

Why weren't you out on Saturday at High Roothing Street? Ah, my kind fellow, spare our feelings; we have heard all about it. "The 12-mile point." "The best day of the season." And the more we hear the more sorrowful we feel that such a glorious opportunity was missed, when the fun of a month was condensed into a day's sport. Three grand runs they had in King William's land, and if the second was better than the first, then the third was better than any; and this I take it from a man[1] who was there, and who is not addicted to piling on the agony—one who rides hard, and rides straight as the crow flies, and hasn't a spark of jealousy in him.

But take heart of grace, ye gallant stag hunters! ye lady bicyclists! ye harrier thrusters. They did not kill, and three gallant foxes live for another day.

Monday, North Weald.—A frost postponed meet. December 23rd will ever be remembered as the flat hat day; not a single pink coat, not a single silk hat, not one immaculate pair of breeches—with the exception of the Master's and the staff's—could be seen. But better than white breeches, pink coats, and glossy hats were several neat-fitting habits, and their wearers did not repine at a day in the woods, as they were glad indeed to have snatched one from the frost. We only saw one dirty coat all day, young Mr. New's, and he appeared to have had a most crushing fall (Cape papers do not copy), and only two hot horses, Mr. George Hart's and Jack's; but if you try to stop four couples of hounds when they have cleared the big wood and with a piping hot scent have skimmed the open

[1] Mr. Newman Gilbey.

for two or three miles, you can warm up the most sluggish quadruped upon the coldest day.

When Mr. Hart first set off in pursuit of these flying couples and Jack, he imagined he was at the tail of the hunt, for he was leisurely riding down the road when he spied them. Picture his satisfaction when he realised that he was at the head of affairs, and the field were furlongs behind! He certainly looked very happy and cheerful when he came back to the woods.

After all, the woods were about the best place that day, the bitterly cold wind hardly softening the frost-bound ground. No one was sorry when the order was given for home, in spite of gloomy anticipations of no hunting on the morrow. All our pretty ladies and all our brave *chasseurs* must have been agreeably surprised when they came down to breakfast

George Hart on "The Knight"

on Tuesday morning to see ground still free from snow, for the air seemed pregnant with it, as it rushed in ever-hurrying blasts across the leaden sky or moaned in the chimney like some unquiet spirit. Had the wind veered another point or two to the north, we should have had our Christmas Eve ride in the snow instead of the stinging rain. You couldn't get away from it at Hatfield Heath, and scant law was given to late comers.

The old gap near Quick Wood had been stiffly done up, and there

wasn't a man in the hunt who would look at it. So single file through the mud they had to go. By the way hounds ran this fox to ground, we could tell that, in spite of falling glass and squalls of rain, that there was a fair scent. And so we turned towards the Down Hall coverts with all the more assurance. In my lord's gorse we found him, and in five minutes our fox had fairly embarked on a good country, the first flighters had settled in their places, the Admiral had fairly demonstrated that there are more ways than one through a thick fence; the Mate had followed him, and then, when all was *couleur de rose*, scent failed.

In Matching Park we picked up the gorse fox or his brother, and we ran him hard and ran him straight to the fagot stack, the Admiral again being far the quickest in this nice little dart. I don't think I can ever

Quick Wood

recall an occasion when half-a-dozen or so riders so quickly shot off from and left a big field, for all started fairly together from Matching Park. Did you view him out of the fagot heap? If not, let me tell you he was a very fine fox, and he took us for another very nice little dart over a very nice little country before he was lost on Mr. James's farm at Magdalen Laver. Mr. Horner jumped the Weald brook when you thrusters were looking for the food, and the drop on the landing side was not to be trifled with. I don't remember ever finding again, but when the hounds were blown out of the osiers at Harlow Bury the rain was still spitting down, the easterly wind had lost none of its keenness, and on the following morning the landscape was white with snow. "A merry Christmas to you all, and a happy New Year when it comes."

Shall we hunt? This thought must have been uppermost in the minds of many as they drove or rode to the meet at Fyfield on Saturday, December 28th, 1895; not because of the frost, for although fairly sharp, sharp

enough to dry the roads, encrust the ploughs, cover the ponds with a thin coating of ice, and freeze all the roadside pools, it was only one night's visitation of the huntsman's bugbear, but because of the cold, dry, marrow-piercing fog—a fog with no moisture in it, or it would have rimed on the hedgerows and trees—for as it wrapped us in its blue embrace it was freezing hard.

Now, a curious thing about this fog; the higher the ground the thicker it became, and on the heights of Epping you could not see across a field, but as we gradually dropped down to the river's bed at Moreton, hope dawned upon us, for the fog was thinner and the frost not half so severe: but still the hounds were not on, and 12 o'clock, you remarked, would

Fyfield

strike before they put in an appearance. The advent of one of the Hunt servants at the meet, with the intelligence that hounds were only half-a-mile behind, soon dispelled this illusion, and with it our last fears, for the fog was certainly lifting every minute.

It was a holiday gathering, a bumper meet, a representative throng, most of them legitimate followers of our subscription pack, who fore-gathered at Fyfield, and among them, bar printer's errors, I can vouch for the following:—Masters, none! all will hear with much regret that Mr. Arkwright was too unwell to be out. However, both our popular secretaries and Mr. C. E. Green—the latter in charge—Colonel Lockwood, M.P., and the rest, if you have no objection, off the subscription list that lies before me, with a few additions; Mr. Askwith, Mr. Walter Buck-master, Miss Ida Blyth and the Misses Blyth, Messrs. Ball (3), Mr. F. Barclay, Mr. Pemberton-Barnes, Mr. Basham, Mr. Brindle, Captain and Mrs. Bruce, Mr. Borwick and son, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Buxton, the Misses Buxton (2), Mr. George Brown, Mr. Cairns, Mr. W. S. Carr, Mr.

Cockett, Mr. Capel-Cure, Mr. Chaffey-Collin, Mr. T. Cowee, Mr. and Mrs. Weston Crocker, Mr. D. Christy, Mr. Dent, Mr. Nevill Dawson, Mr. Dunlop, Mr. H. Fowler, Mr. S. Fitch, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. G. Gold, Mr. F. Green and family, Mr. Green (of Parndon), Mr. Hart, jun., Mr. Harrison, Messrs. Horner (father and son), Mr. Kortright, Mr. H. E. Jones, Miss Jones, Mr. F. Jones, Mr. P. S. Lee, Mr. H. W. Lee, Mr. Milbank, Mr. Sheffield Neave, M.S.H., Mr. W. M. Marter, Mrs. Neill, Messrs. New (2), Miss Edith Morgan and Miss M. Morgan, Mr. and Mrs. L. Pelly and daughter, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. A. C. Oldham, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Mr. E. Quare, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. Price, Captain and Mrs. Ricardo, Mrs. and Miss Upton, Mr. Usborne, Messrs. W. and G. Sewell, Mr. D. Cunliffe Smith, Mr. R. Cunliffe Smith, Mr. A. R. Steele and brother, Mr. Percy Tippler, Messrs. J. and M. Tyndale White, Mr. R. S. Tilling, Mr. and Mrs. Waters, Major Wilson, General Sir E. Wood, V.C., Mr. Waltham.

R. J. Dunlop on "Peggy"

Mr. Dunlop is not the only one who, coming into Essex from the Land of Cakes, has developed a love for the manly sport of fox-hunting. Mr. Ritchie, of Willingale, was another. 'Tis common knowledge that he can hold his own in a quick

thing with fox or staghounds with any native-bred sportsman, and is hard as nuts, if indifference to falls counts for anything. Not that he gets many, for "Peggy," from the time he purchased her at my recommendation in 1891 from Mr. Custance, of Greensted, as a three-year-old, took to hunting as naturally as most of the stock of Sir Walter Gilbey's famous horse "Pedometer" have done. Mr. Dunlop has been a very useful friend to fox-hunting at Norton Hall.

The Osiers, Forest Hall

"Keep a bit up your sleeve," said my friend Smith, "they are going into their best country in the afternoon after their best fox;" and he chortled greatly when he remarked that he had reserved the priceless "Peri" for the afternoon, with strict injunctions to his Peter Leather "To feed her carefully and then drop her down from the clouds at a certain covert." "My dear boy! Why!!—(I never swear)—why didn't you tell me sooner? Here I am riding "Bellerophon," and that brute of a mare is being reserved for the afternoon. Well, it is too late now. Just send a message by your man to mine to drop my mare down at the same place, and, by all that's uncharitable, may we get a good run in the morning!"

Into the osiers by the slippery bridge, over the river—not at home—and up the drive towards Witney Wood. Mr. Dunlop, the sporting, hard-working farmer, of Norton Hall, appeared on the scene with the information that just two hours previously a big fox had been viewed into a small spinney in the park.

With Mr. Green's instructions to the huntsman to keep his horn going,

and to the field to keep off the grass in front of the big house, we trooped past it, and before you had time to pull out your watch or complete the sentence, you were racing over the grass for a start, the big dogs flying on in front. In and out of the belt of trees, one more fence, and we crossed the farm road and swung down the hill for the wood at the bottom. Left-handed, or right, which was it to be? in either case the furrows diagonally if you would reach the wood in time not to be shut out. Round went the huntsman's horse at the down hill fence parallel to the wood on the right as Capt. Bruce led over, and immediately afterwards we could see the fox, a great strapping yellow beggar, come leathering back over the wheat field. "Let them alone!" shouted the huntsman, for eight couple of the dogs were right at his brush. Now it was a case of back, and striking the

Forest Hall

farm road a bit lower, almost close to the lodge gates—luckily an up jump, or we might have gone into the wire (not Mr. Dunlop's) on the opposite side. It was fairly a case of the last being first, for the road was blocked up with the late division. To thread your way through these as fast as you could and gallop on and jump out of the plantation was your only chance of salvation.

The Captain's bay was again flipping over the fence; out of the wood, and the furrows once again had to be taken diagonally as we steered down the field for the osiers. A little knowledge may be a dangerous thing; but it came in uncommonly useful here, for exactly where hounds crossed was a ford. Lower down many on the right were riding post-haste for the bridge which we had so recently crossed. Once over the ford the die was cast, your retreat cut off, for a hundred impatient riders were splashing through it; so doubly welcome!! the whimper of hounds! in the planta-

tion on the other side of the river. Upon your choice of which side of this plantation you elected to go entirely depended your position in *the race for Blake Hall*.

The huntsman went right-handed, and of course the majority followed him, for wherever he goes he always has a pretty large *clientèle*. Apparently both contingents were equally well placed, for after leaving the plantation behind, hounds bore, if anything, right-handed along a boggy bottom, and then suddenly swung to the left for Ongar, and then came a delay, which cost so many their place, for the leaders all pulled up to scan the boggy ditch. I can see the huntsman now as I write, with his horse held tight by the head peering into its treacherous depths, and I can see him no more until we reached Blake Hall.

Wood near Forest Hall

Mr. Jones, muttering, "he is making his point after all," was quietly cantering along in the wake of hounds, which just short of the Four Wants swung to the right and crossed the road below the Dun Cow. No time to open the black gate; in and out went Mr. Sheffield Neave, Mr. Jones, Mr. Gerald Gold, Mr. Howard Fowler, and Major Wilson, and the few, very few, who were with them, the rustics gleefully pointing out the line the fox had gone. We had only half the hounds, but they were the pick of the basket, and none of their little band of followers meant spoiling their own fun by overriding hounds, as running parallel with the road for a couple of fields down hill and all plough, they leapt lightly over the deep drop, and disappeared up the grassy bank on the far side. The gate opened readily, and it was now a toss-up which side of the river to go. A hundred yards down the road a bridge, and the fox appeared to be making for Blake Hall, and in that case was bound to cross (as he did)

the river at once, or up the bank after hounds, with Mr. Sheffield Neave and Mr. Jones. It mattered not, for as the right-hand contingent galloped through the gate—readily swung by the men at the hay-stack (no time to chuck them a shilling)—and on over the grass with the hounds, those on the left—led by Mr. Jones—were splashing through a ford over the river, which they had the good luck to hit off in their stride.

With our forces united we had a clear country before us—a sea of billowy grass stretching away to Blake Hall, and not a strand of wire to mar it—and hounds running on at a maddening pace, on past Water End Farm, they swung a bit to the right, and we reached the ha-ha as hounds dashed into the policies. Which side? again became the burning question,

Full Cry past Blake Hall

for iron rails stretched right and left. Mr. Bevan plumped for the kissing gate, as a man lifted it off its hinges, and a hundred yards or so to the left, those who were with hounds, a dozen at the outside, jumped into the drive by the lodge gates. Here the huntsman luckily caught us as hounds came to their first check, a welcome respite to those who had had to gallop to keep with them in this three-mile point, a godsend to those who started badly. With our numbers considerably augmented, we entered upon the second phase of this excellent run as we clattered up the drive six abreast and out by the iron gates. Did we make a loop to the right? I can't remember, but can vividly recall Bailey sitting well back over the thorn fence, with big drop beyond, as hounds ran on below Bovinger Wood, with Major Wilson close behind him, and Mr. Tyndale White on "Spitfire" riding his own line well on the right.

Three more grass meadows and we jumped in and out of the road

below Bovinger Hall Farm, and still on the grass reached the Bovinger and Moreton Road, down which many of us had driven that morning, little recking that in an hour or two's time we should be crossing it with hounds full cry. Swinging a bit to the right, hounds ran beautifully down to the brook below Mr. James's Farm, and we splashed through a couple of fords, and squeezed through a narrow gate. Up hill, on over a couple of fields of stubble, they suddenly swung to the left and commenced *running* again down a succession of long grass meadows that fringed the brook. Those who jumped it were apparently wrong, for hounds turned, if anything, to the left. Crossing the road below Magdalen Laver Hall, we dived down the opposite lane, which was uncommonly deep, and came to a locked gate. To turn over the fence at the side and jump the next was the work of a second, and we reached Belgium Springs as hounds dashed into them.

One field beyond they threw up, and Mr. Waltham, taking out his watch, made it forty-two minutes. I shall always think that we changed foxes here, for hounds never ran again with the same dash, in fact they never ran at all. They hunted very prettily to Hobbs' Cross, Hubbards Hall, Barnsley's, Mark Hall, and Vicarage Wood, but the fire was out, and only the afterglow remained—an afterglow that will never grow dull for years to come in the hearts of those whose lucky star was in the ascendant in this splendid run—one, if not the very nicest, I have ever seen in Essex.*

Another good Monday, December 30th, 1895.—I have not told you of the last one yet; suffice it to say that in the Thoby Wood country, on the borders of the Essex Union Hunt, perhaps the smallest field on record this season (forty at the outside) were present to participate, first in a run of forty-five minutes, the preliminary twenty very fast, winding up with a kill in the open, over a very rough, if *impartial*, country, for it took toll of everybody. Five were down at one fence at a very early stage of the proceedings. In the second run, for the first twenty-five minutes hounds simply flew (Mr. Waltham showing us all the way), making a good point, which brought in a lot of grass; and hunting grandly for another forty minutes, until the shades of night compelled the huntsman to give it up some twenty miles from the Kennels.

Lucky were you indeed if you found your legs under the mahogany at Marden Ash at 5.30 p.m. While tired horses were being cared for, we were entertained right royally. The two 'Varsity men must have thanked their good fortune; at last they had fallen on their feet (I can't say how many times they had been standing on their heads), or it's little dancing they would have felt equal to that night, I'm thinking. The hospitable owner† of Marden Ash doesn't smoke (is that why his iron nerve is unimpaired?), but he has a son who does, and a very nice cigar he gave us; but it was not the first good turn the *bon fils* had done us that day, for when hounds were running their fastest, and some of the hottest thrusters were cornered by wire, he went for it and, turning with his horse a complete somersault, came up smiling, for the wire was broken and the course clear. A bird whispered to us that he was riding one of the carriage horses; if so, it would account for his previous toss over high timber, over which Mrs. Upton and our secretary, Mr. Roly Bevan, had flown like birds.

Towards the end of the run Mr. Dalton's horse gave him what looked

* Mr. W. S. Horner wrote: "I have seen some good runs, but none better than this Forest Hall one."

† Mr. H. E. Jones.

liked an *ugly fall* over some rails and a wide ditch; but the horse lost nothing in my estimation in the process, for had he not been carrying his owner to the front all day? Another gentleman,‡ in pink had real bad luck, for his horse, not content with wedging himself heels up in a very narrow ditch (costing his owner considerably over a sovereign before he was set up on all fours), had the ill manners, when hacking home, to come down and blister his knees. Altogether, bar these *contretemps*, it was a day full of incident and pleasure; *in fact, an old-fashioned Monday.*

Sandwiched in between this and the day of which I have more to say presently came Wednesday and Friday. Of the first it may be related that it was freely described on all sides as having been a disappointing day. This I can readily credit; unless you plugged round Parndon Wood three times with hounds you could have had no idea where they had been, nor have seen them when they emerged from the breakers sailing over the smooth waters beyond; but it was heaven while it lasted, and the two ladies, Mrs. Arkwright and Miss Jones, were of the lucky few who saw hounds flying up wind to Marles; *grass every yard of it, and the pace ultra.* The horse that will stand the battering through the deep and muddy rides of Parndon Woods and Galley Hills must have uncommonly good legs. You'll not gainsay it if you will pay a visit to your stable after one of these woodland days and compare with previous experience after a day in the open. If Wednesday was a bad scenting day, Friday was an exceptionally good one, for hounds scored one of the most brilliant runs on record from Brockleys. Running for one hour and ten minntes in a thick fog, *without the semblance of a check*, they killed their fox. No wonder that there were only three besides the huntsman and Jack Turner who saw it, viz., Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. Pemberton Barnes, and Col. Gardiner, the horses of the two latter being reduced to a trot. Mr. Myfield and another farmer nicked in just before they killed. As for the rest of the field, they were either lost in the fog, came down, or their horses were cooked.

Now for Monday! My Monday! Your Monday! the 6th of January, 1896, at Dagenham. We were a very happy little band, I can tell you; with a strong leaven of schoolboys and a good sprinkling of some of our fairest and prettiest ladies; and we came out to find a fox, and kill a fox, in spite of all the gloomy prognostications of the croakers. Hunt breakfasts may be dying out—the reason not far to seek—but the hospitality which Mr. Sands extends to all comers remains the same as of yore, and for the second time this season we all gladly accepted what was so freely offered—and there are worse things, let me tell you, than cherry or orange brandy when the wind has been steadily blowing from the east for three consecutive days and a dull leaden sky o'er head.

To Dagenham Woods and coverts adjoining in which foxes are known to exist. They had been seen on the Saturday previous. We shall find them one of these days when some of the *Roothing Skimmers* are toasting their toes at their firesides, or wading through their City accounts. To make things lively, someone halloaed a hare. If Mr. Barclay had been out I am afraid that he would have turned green with jealousy when he saw the keen and brilliant way the bitches ran her. Small blame to them! for the huntsman laid them on to the line, in good faith, at the double. But how about the man who halloaed? What ought to be done to him? No, really, Capt. B., I can't produce it here, though I grant what you said was very much to the point.

Now, it could not have been less than two miles by the chain to Dagenham (the scene of the morning's meet), from the point Jack suc-

‡ Mr. Ford Barclay.

ceeded in turning hounds from running hare; but the day was rapidly advancing, so the huntsman lost no time in trotting back. As we turned up the road to Pyrgo Park only those in the front could see *the uplifted hat*, or recognise it at once as a genuine signal when they caught sight of the owner, Mr. Avila. The huntsman, who is nothing if he is not quick, put his horse into a hand gallop, and those near him followed suit. But how about the laggards still on the other road? What were they doing, eh! Major?

Just opposite Pyrgo Wood, just five minutes from the time of getting the information from Mr. Avila, and exactly ten behind the fox, Bailey laid hounds on the track. No mistake this time. They opened at once, and smeused through the first fence, a high bullfinch with hairy ditch and

Duck Wood, Dagnams

only one weak spot—the stump of a tree scooped out on the far side, and with ragged projecting teeth. If your horse didn't jump big and far you would have lamed him for a certainty and probably have come down a cropper. Mr. Avila, on a valuable young horse, declined with thanks, as Major Wilson, Capt. Beresford, and several others took their turn after the huntsman, who implored us not to press hounds, for the fox was ten minutes ahead, and he had been turning up and down the hedgerows like a hare. It was beautiful to see hounds working it out, and none of the charm in these preliminary ten minutes would have been lost had fences been a bit easier, but we had a bold leader in the huntsman, and we followed him like sheep.

Yes, right into the dark corner, where there wasn't an outlet; you couldn't see over, and you couldn't see through, but hounds were on, and at all risks the huntsman meant to be with them, so taking his horse back,

he sent him at the thickest place, a trifle lower than the rest, and got over well—in fact, a good deal better than those who followed him. Capt. Beresford's horse fell, but he did not part company, and they got up together, as hounds ran on and over a brook, which we had reached in our mazy wanderings. Working splendidly, without any assistance from the huntsman, the bitches hunted out all those twists and turns, those entwining puzzles, so baffling to hounds, so useful to those who, starting badly, wanted to nick in with them (the Mate was one). It was time they did, for the chase was warming up as, minute by minute, hounds were getting on better terms with their fox, *and the pace was becoming faster.*

Not touching Curtis Mill Green, although at first running in that direction, they ran back along the brook, and recrossing it almost at once, swung up hill towards Mr. French's Farm. To get over the brook one way was one thing, to get back another. Several of us, including Mr. Price and Major Glynn, rode a right-hand course of our own rather than get engulfed, but I think the number of fences to be encountered had some attraction for two of these gentlemen, one after the other, half-a-dozen at least, before they could reach the Havering road, which hounds appeared to be on the point of crossing, when a vigorous halloa towards Stapleford Hall Farm (on the right side of the brook, too, by all that was lucky!) indicated the line the fox had gone and the one hounds must take.

One dark hound (a field ahead of the others) was already flinging up the seed field beyond the brook, never having left the line, and helter-skelter came the others after her without any assistance from the huntsman, who could gallop comfortably alongside the hounds on the road until they crossed just below Mr. Martin's Farm.

What a mistake it is to fumble at a gate when hounds are running. We had to follow Major Glynn over the drop into the road after all. Now the fun of the fair began to wax hot and furious, for not only were there at this point a good number of pursuers on most excellent terms with hounds, notably Mr. F. Green and Mr. J. Pelly, both on greys, Miss Jones and Miss Morgan, but hounds were running on ahead at a great pace after their fox, having forced him at last to give up his labyrinthine twists, and to set his mask straight for the dark woodlands in the distance. Horses were blowing freely as they rose the hill, for fence succeeded fence in rapid succession, and they gained little respite as they swung down from its crest and were called upon to jump the rough bottom, over which Mr. F. Green flew like a bird; another sharp ascent, and we were within a field of Hainault Forest.

Before turning back the fox set his head for the Colonel's coverts, crossing the road by Black Bush Farm, and leaving it and the big wood on the right, and running straight over the grass meadows for Lambourne End, he took another sharp turn to the right. Not a twist, you note, but hounds could follow without the semblance of a check, and so up to the small wood at the back of Bishops Hall, through it, and away over the grass for Lambourne End church. Through it, I said; yes, but not by going over the wire netting. Miss M. Buxton found herself on the wrong side of the wire, but she took it and the ditch beyond without a thought of stopping, for it was a case of neck or nothing at the pace hounds were going. Down the avenue, Mr. New's bay did not seem to be pulling, and towards the gorse you would, if you were lucky, have turned over the briar fence with Messrs. G. Sewell, Horner, and Single, and ridden the string of the bow the hounds were making as they fairly flew round the outskirts of Apes Grove, towards the Rectory, leaving it on the right and down to Cranes, and without dwelling, and as quickly away, Mr. J. Pelly going

very strong on his grey in the front as hounds tore along for the big wood. Breaking at the bottom end, he doubled back, and with hounds close at him took his last turn, for as he reached the boundary fence of the large wheat field they had him. *Five-and-forty minutes* of the best hunting I have seen for many a day. Nobody moved away from the spot where the fox was broken up for at least fifteen minutes (the surest indication of a good run that exists) and pads were selling at about 10s. each.

This fox was a traveller, and he knew the Colonel's coverts, and made his point. Draw a line from Pyrgo Wood to Apes Grove, not a bad one, and a very nice country if you like hairy, scrambling fences, with plenty of them. A place one of Mr. F. Green's boys went over made me shudder; it was the return journey by the brook before we reached the Havering road. I can't think how he managed it; the animal he was riding must have been as clever as a cat, but he let him have his head and didn't hang on by the reins—but even then I expected to see them both roll back together.

John Gurney Pelly and his hunter, "Snowstorm"

Few better horses than "Snowstorm" ever looked through a bridle in Essex. None required more care in the bridling, for anyone attempting it in the ordinary way would soon have

found himself on the floor. No; you had to undo his bridle and fasten it by the side of his head, and even then with a stranger he was very tricky, the peculiarity arising most probably from the caustic treatment of warts in his ear; but when the bridle was safely on he was worth all the care and attention bestowed upon him, for he stood out, though only 15.2, a hunter anyone would have been glad to have had a day on, and the best Mr. Pelly ever possessed. Originally the property of Mr. Brand, Master of the Southdown, he was purchased by Sir H. Selwin Ibbetson during his Mastership of the Essex Hunt, and ridden by his huntsman for three seasons, rarely ever giving him a fall, and confessedly one of the best horses Bailey ever rode. On Sir Henry resigning the Mastership of the Essex Hounds in 1886, he came into Mr. Pelly's possession and has been ridden by him ever since. He is still as game as a pebble and retains sufficient of his wonderful staying powers and love of fencing to make him a delightful mount; what he could do in the year 1896 Mr. Pelly fully demonstrated in the great Dagenham run of January 6th.

The order was soon given for Curtis Mill Green; this made one-horse men shake their heads and look serious. But what could they do on such a scenting day? Certainly not go home, and quite right, for they were amply rewarded for staying out with twenty-five minutes of the best from Curtis Mill Green. If the country had been rough before lunch it was twice as bad after, and tired horses were falling in all directions. I am afraid that one man* broke his collar bone. Where did you get your fall, Mr. Maurice,† and yours, Major Glynn, and yours, Capt. Beresford? The old line from Curtis Mill Green to the Horseshoe wood at Rose Hall, no better and no rougher; the huntsman was riding a clinking good horse, but he only just got over the wide bramble fence near Mr. Miles' off-hand farm; it brought Mr. Horner, sen., down, but on the right side.

Without a check hounds went straight down to the river, ran its banks for 100 yards towards the Navestock coverts, and then dashing in, shook themselves on the opposite side, and went chiming away over the grass towards Stanford Rivers. Back for your life! back to the bridge by the mill! and not one of us overtook hounds again before we reached the road below Mr. Freeman's farm, where luckily they had checked. With one wave of his cap the huntsman put them on the line, and they streamed away up the grass for Berwick Wood, and out at the top of the next covert on the right, where the run virtually came to an end, for coming out hounds made a most curious backward cast; and although Bailey took hold of them and held them on to Knightsland, into which the fox was viewed by Easterby, he slipped away without his seeing him; but as we rode home we passed the men who halloaed him on to Ongar Park, while further on, near the woods, a man cutting bushes waved his arm showing where our fox had gained this fastness—a good bold fox and a good bold

* Mr. C. Savill. † Major Maurice Marter.

line, and we may hope to run him again this season with ordinary luck. Mr. Darby, who was having a day with us, said that it reminded him of old times; it certainly did me good to see the quiet, resolute way in which he rode the Cat, his famous bay horse, to the front in this last gallop.

Nasing Common, a run with one of Mr. Charles Bury's foxes over the grass to the forest marked the morning's proceedings; with the loop round the house we did it in thirty-five minutes. It was a pretty find in Mr. Bury's new plantation on the hill. The huntsman's bare head, the only clue we had, as we clustered in the road, that they had done so. A momentary glimpse of the horn to his mouth, facing towards Nasing Bury, a hint sufficient to stick to the road, and the few who did, including the Master and Capt. Bruce, cut the point where hounds crossed on as good terms as the huntsman and young Mr. Bury, the only two near them in the fields. Then grief and disaster! A good start, a good nick in, all thrown away by two or three hounds hanging back in the shrubberies through which the main body of the pack had slipped unobserved by Master or huntsman.

We dallied scarce a minute, but in those brief seconds hounds succeeded in placing a good half-mile to their credit before we were at liberty to set to work to try and catch them. Those in the meantime who had ridden right-handed of Nasing Bury House, though not with hounds, were not delayed, and were flying the fence at the top of the hill, where two gaps let them out over the drop, and then every gap had a pony in it or a loose horse, or a refuser, before we turned back to the green lane that led down to Galley Hills. Mr. Baddeley's horse was going at large, but his boy was there to catch him—a filial duty methinks he would gladly have delegated to someone else if the chance had occurred. Jumping out of the lane we could see those nearest the hounds flying along at a great pace on the grass, for the brook below Marsh Farm, Mr. Ned Ball with a strong lead on the right; so to the road, the gate locked, but as we jumped out on the left a scatter and crash could be heard on the right, the huntsman was down under his horse, as he failed to clear the five-barred gate, over which Mr. Jones had given him a lead. He couldn't move for a few seconds, but the moment he caught sight of Dr. Love he just got some one to hoist him up, and away he went again.

Nothing like a doctor handy, and a doctor who means jumping. In the meantime Master Ned Ball had made such play up Galley Hills' rough rides that he and Mr. Jones were absolutely the only men with hounds who had started and ridden to them. Fortunately hounds hung a bit on the far side of Galley Hills, or surely up those deep, sobbing rides we should never have caught them. Twang, twang, went the Master's horn as he laid the hounds on over the broad green lane in the direction of Warlies, and the huntsman, coming up, held them forward to the grass beyond Green's Farm; from here they wanted no assistance, though we should like to know the name of the dog that, certainly for six fields, had the fun all to himself, the huntsman and Mr. Harry Sworder riding right at him, the pack a field behind. One dog is not enough for me nor my horse; we both like a lot of bow-wows in front. Not so Mr. Peel; he loves a small, if connected, pack. So, while all this fun was going on, he was gaily sailing away by himself and three doggies in the direction of Roydon.

Running almost field for field, and yard for yard, as on the last occasion when we galloped this grass line for the Forest, we had no difficulty in taking our bearings before we raced over Copped Hall Park and reached the Warren. Some say our fox went right through the Forest with a few

couple of hounds, but it is a rare thing to force a fox through it, and into the open beyond—though we have seen it done, and have the mask of a fox who was killed in this way many years ago—in Col. Howard's time—a real three-year-old customer.

Now what about the little spin from Latton Park in the evening over the steeplechase course? (1) Very few stayed out for it, the Hertfordshire contingent having left early for the Hatfield Ball. (2) In spite of its untimely ending, the fox getting hurt in a fence (he was best killed), it was worth all the rest of the day put together. Say what you like, the majority of us love the pace when hounds fling forward at such a tune over the grass that gallop your hardest you cannot gain a yard on them. They didn't do it that night, but went very near it, having scored a good start. When they left Latton, they made the best of it, and fences had to be taken flying if you would have seen the fox pulled down just short of Weald Coppice.

"Who-hoop," at the finish; each hound in his place,
What more could a sportsman require?
The huntsman replied, with a smile on his face,
When asked for the time of this wonderful race,
'The pace was too good to inquire.'" PHILLPOTTS WILLIAMS.

I am afraid the pace was too good to stop for the man who was dragged by his horse after he was once clear, with a happy smile on his face—a smile of thankfulness at happy release from a great danger. Someone was pulled off at the last fence, a pretty thick bullfinch, which Messrs. W. Sewell, Mr. Evans, and Captain Bruce pierced in order named. Two ladies were at the tail of the hounds in this last and rapid burst, Miss Morgan and——No, I mustn't tell you; but she was riding a lovely little bay!

Saturday, January 11th, at Moreton.—For a week past the probable draw from this particular fixture had been discussed in all its bearings. Men talked about it with bated breath going up in the train, and harped upon it coming down. Two hard riders, almost coming to blows over it, and eventually lapsing into despair of guessing the conundrum, gave it up, resolved at all hazards to ride to the meet and see. Personally, my own impressions may be guessed by the orders given to my second-horse man: "Leave home at twelve, come to the meet, and follow them up."

It was as well, for the draw took many by surprise: a retrograde movement of four or five miles in the direction of Chelmsford, from which so many hailed, having to be executed before the surprise packet was opened beyond the slippery bridge at Forest Hall. This time the Forest Hall run did not come off, worse luck; it is even doubtful whether the fox we ran from there a fortnight before still lives, for hounds pressed him very hard at the beginning and end of the run to Belgium Springs.

When we arrived at Screens we discovered for the first time how bad scent was in covert, and this may easily account for our not having found before. With a brace of foxes in front of them hounds could scarcely speak to either, but would probably have killed one if he hadn't taken refuge in a tree, judging by the pace they raced him across Screens Park.

At Garnish scent was, if anything, worse, and hounds had actually left the covert when a lynx-eyed sportsman,* whom no one would believe until he had taken his oath to it, swore he had seen a fox cross the ride. The huntsman came galloping back, hounds tuned up, and away we went in the direction of Lords and Leaden. No run worth mentioning came of it,

* Mr. T. Simonds.

but a hang-about fox was brought to book, and the folly of letting go the reins when you turn head-over-heels was once more fully demonstrated. Goodness knows where the brown horse† would have gone to if it had not been for the plucky action of a carter some miles from the King William; he was cheaply recovered at 5s.

The pleasantest feature, the *best omen* of the whole day, was the presence in our midst of that straight rider to hounds, General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., for we were all anxious about our kith and kin across the sea.‡

General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C.

This excellent likeness of the General, as we know him in the hunting fields of Essex, was taken early one morning in '97 in the stable yard of the "King William," just as he was

† Berserker.

‡ The Transvaal trouble. (It came to a head at last in the autumn of 1899, and alas! many a cheery and gallant comrade with whom we have been privileged to ride side by side we shall never see again).—Ed.

starting for the "Axe and Compasses," a very favourite meet of his. Not that any come amiss. Equally at home in the flying country of the Roothings, with its wide ditches and interminable ploughs, as over the big banking country of which Doddinghurst is the centre, I have never yet seen a feasible fence that would stop the General when hounds were running, although I have seen him go over a good many obstacles that no no else cared to tackle. Very partial to timber, he always goes for it, and must have jumped more rails, stiles, and gates in his time than could be readily counted. The Essex men are very proud of the General. He is a universal favourite, he always has a pleasant word and kind smile for each one with

"Vagabond"

whom a day's hunting brings him in touch, be he peasant, farmer, or squire. Even the Master smiles at the General's one little failing, an occasional deafness when riding his pulling horse.

That Sir Evelyn is a thorough believer in the great Duke's dictum, that the hunting field is the best school in the world for cavalry officers, goes without saying. That being a non-smoker and of most temperate habits has enabled him to out-last all his contemporaries in the hunting field is equally true, even if it is not so generally known.

"The best horse I ever had or am ever likely to have," Sir Evelyn wrote when sending me a photograph of the painting of his favourite. "He gave me several falls the first time I rode him, but subsequently carried Lady Wood and myself for several seasons without a mistake." He omitted to mention, however, that when he went to the wars he mortgaged him to his brother, Charles Page Wood, who was then acting as Secretary to the Essex Stag Hounds during Mr. Henry Petre's Mastership. He writes me:—"As for my brother's 'Vagabond,' he was indeed a scamp and instigated by the d——l at times, grassed me more than once. I detested the horse, feeling he only permitted me to ride him by sufferance. However, I had to try, and hunting with the Stag Hounds every Tuesday, I used to rail to Chelmsford, but soon discovered that 'Vagabond' refused to go to the meet, but would run backwards on to the pavement and into the shop windows just outside the station. My master, Henry Petre, kindly arranged to do escort, and by his help I used to coax 'Vagabond' to the scene of action. Once there he was happy enough. Timber was his strong point, and he rarely struck a gate or a stile. When his ungovernable temper took possession of him he was utterly reckless whither he went or what became of him. Once he climbed up the steps of Stirling Castle.

"But hold hard! I have no time. This was written days ago and interrupted. You must get hold of my old friend, W. H. White, and get us together with a shorthand writer, and we could give you the coltish chronicle by the hour."

Unluckily I was never able to do this, but perhaps a Druid of the future will be more fortunate; or better still, Mr. Charles Page Wood and his friend, Mr. W. H. White—better known as Captain White when he held the Mastership of the Essex Hounds—may be induced to jointly publish their sporting reminiscences.

Hallingbury Place

CHAPTER II.

Hallingbury Place—A Record Season—Bailey's Skill as a Huntsman—The Gilbey Lead—Parndon Woods—Gerald Buxton goes Home too soon—His Reverence gets his blood up—John Archer Houblon—A Run in the Fog from Balls Hill Wood—A Clue at Last—Into the Warren—Not a Soul with Them—Stag v. Fox-hunting—Mr. Docwra's Timber Jumper—Miss A. N. Docwra's "Larry"—Tawney Hall—The Fatter they are the better they go—A quick thing from Mills's Fagot Stack—"Daylight"—Mrs. Upton's "Fairyland"—Shrove Tuesday, 1896—Rev. G. Ward Saunders on "Cockie"—The Essex Union—Hutton Checkers—Mr. Wm. Gardiner and Dr. Carter—Park Hill Wood—The Point-to-Point Races in 1896—The Price and Barclay Match—"Spitfire"—Mr. T. Milbank's "Sir Frederick"—"Bright Light"—Audley Blyth on "The Actress"—Epping Long Green—A Day on the Grass—The Gregory-cum-Cook corner—"Kathleen"—The Key to Deer Park—Follow the Mate—Charlie Webster—A Trying Run—Theydon Grove—William Nicholson.

MONDAY last forms another link in the chain of success with which the huntsman of the Essex Hounds has with such unrivalled skill been slowly but surely welding round the season now in full swing—a season that bids fair to beat the record of any that had gone before, as day rapidly follows day of unequalled sport, for not only are foxes killed (the surest way of preserving them), but we have runs of great length and brilliant bursts (the flashes of a huntsman's inspiration), which, although surrounded and hampered as he so often is by a hard-riding field, he never fails to bring off.

Wasn't Monday last a fair sample of all I have stated? But more remains to be told. Who could find fault with the run in the morning from the fagot stack? The dash and drive of the Essex lady pack was a treat to witness. How rapidly they shook off all but the hardest and straightest riders in their first rapid sweep round Garnish Hall, by Theydon Farm, and back to the stack heap! How they stuck to their fox when he was bolted again, and never left him for a second, until they marked him to ground where he sought refuge in vain, and how beautifully they hunted up to him and pulled him down in Mr. Avila's wood! And all, or nearly all, of this revel took place on the grass, and thirty minutes passed as rapidly and pleasantly as heart could wish.

From Shalesmore we have another tale to tell, the skill of our huntsman revealed in another form. No longer on the grass, but cold-scenting plough, with a falling glass and flashy scent, he brought off a splendid run of one hour and fifty minutes. Taking us by Sir Charles Smith's coverts, and Toot Hill, we reached Ongar Park, and here, I venture firmly but respectfully to tell the field, we should most probably have spent the rest of our day, had we not possessed at the head of affairs a very keen Master, served by an equally keen huntsman. How's that, you ask? Why, Ongar Park was full of foxes, who could have rung the changes very comfortably without leaving its leafy precincts, and frittered away a short January afternoon, and none of us have been any the wiser, and none of us to say it was wrong.

What did happen? Why, I will tell you. A stout bold woodland fox went away when hounds were ringing round the covert, setting his mask for a journey over a rough, wild country that every minute would take hounds further from kennels; and without a moment's delay, as soon as he could collect his hounds, the huntsman came flying after him, and we embarked upon the jolliest hunt of the day—over a grand, if stiff country, grass freely alternating with ploughed land. Leaving Greensted House on our left, we crossed the Toot Hill Road, and passing by Berwick Farm, through Kettlebury Springs, the pack ran most beautifully at a great pace by the lane down to the river, crossing it near the mill. Into and through Kelvedon Wood with a rare crash of music, they came away on the top of their fox as he left the covert, and pushing him through the Menagerie, he only just managed to shake off his pursuers in the chain of woods which are bounded by Kelvedon Common. No one could regret that a fox who had afforded us such sport escaped after as good a hunting run as one could wish to see, *bringing out as it did in such a prominent light the huntsman's wonderful skill in making his casts;* and it sent us all home in the most cheerful frame of mind, which lost none of its glow from the hearty and generous welcome so freely given at Marden Ash to tired horse and man.

A day of such vivacity could scarcely fail to be marked by incidents of varying form and colour. Our secretary's hat was a picture; Mr. Cowee's coat a study. But the man who didn't have at least one toss was the exception rather than the rule on this particular day. I could mention lots of names, but, as the Professor says in "Cinderella," "Those who live in glass houses should pull down the blinds."

With hounds and without. What a difference! but fortunately one that is hardly felt by the majority of those who make up an average field and perfectly content three, four or five fields behind hounds, as long as they can see some pink coats in front of them, go plodding on, jumping the fences as they come, looking as jolly as sand boys when they turn up at the checks. Happy mortals! for without a shadow of a doubt they extract more honey from the joys of the chase than ever falls to the share of the minority, who if they are not with hounds, curse their luck and wish themselves at home. And by being with hounds, I mean in the same field, or at least never more than one wide of them, right or left. We have said all this before—*n'importe.*

Now, the majority of us were very delighted with the brilliant gallop from Harlow Park ten days ago, on the occasion of the frost-postponed 12 o'clock meet at Thrushes Bush, but the majority of us never saw a yard of it in the true acceptance of the term. We might have retrieved, as many of us did, a bad start from Harlow Park, when hounds checked for an instant in the grass field behind Mr. Lyall's house on Hastingwood Common; we might have seen Bailey knock a hole through the high bull-

finch, and a dozen of the tail hounds waving their sterns as they eagerly sought a way through the fence. We might even have caught sight of Mr. Guy Gilbey flying the stile in perfect form, hands well down, legs tucked back, as his horse bounded over like a deer; but if we did these things and allowed ten seconds, *literally ten seconds*, to elapse before we followed him, the huntsman, or those who pierced the fence at the same time, we might gallop and we might jump, but be with hounds we simply couldn't, as going in and out of the lane they fairly flew over the grass beyond, those pastures which always carry a scent to the brook at the bottom.

They tell me that Mr. Guy Gilbey was the first to fly it, and that until he fell he had the lead of them all, and that when he was down, his cousin Mr. Newman Gilbey, *picked up the fiddle and played the tune for the rest to dance to*, as going a cracker, by Wynters Grange, no one could head him until the hounds threw up near Belgium Springs. "One of the fastest and sweetest things we have had this season," said Major Wilson and Captain Bruce, who freely acknowledged the Gilbey lead.

The country was dotted with riders in all directions; every field had a man, a lady or boy in it. Didn't we have a capital bird's-eye view of the whole thing? having dallied at that Lyall fence for a hat, a brand-new one, but very dear at the price—the loss of such a run. What is the use of a second whip if he can't recover your head gear? Bravo! Easterby; you have earned my eternal gratitude for the deft way you fished out A. J. White's best, and came through the fence with it.

In and out of the lane and down to the brook! as we followed Mr. Avila over and jumped out of the field beyond, didn't we for a moment hug ourselves with the vain delusion that we had caught hounds at last, as the huntsman hove in sight and galloped through the corner and flew the fence out of the rough field behind the Grange. Not a bit of it; the leaders—Mr. E. Ball was one of them—were already over the road, and swinging towards the Springs on the right. The huntsman's horse simply couldn't go the pace; but he caught hounds, when he was wanted, on the road beyond Belgium Springs, where they had checked.

In the meantime those who were behind the huntsman were trying to keep him in sight, going in and out of Mr. Tucker's lane. Mr. Jones, who was riding a slow horse, which he had been pushing along at top speed, came down heavily, and this settled the rest of the gallop, for those who went after his steed or stayed to see how he fared, Mr. Avila and Mr. Bevan taking him in charge. Luckily, beyond a severe shaking, he was none the worse, and pluckily remounting, rode to the end of the run, which came to a sudden stop at Magdalen Laver Hall—twenty minutes exactly from the halloa in Harlow Park. Mr. Sands was one of the lucky few who saw this gallop from start to finish. He always liked a quick thing.

Going back to Latton, we found again at once, a leash being on foot. Unluckily, hounds settled on to a vixen, who, as she kept ringing round Harlow Park and Latton, Mr. Arkwright determined to leave, and gave the order for Parndon Woods, where at 3.30 p.m. the deep sonorous notes of the big dogs proclaimed a find, one of the prettiest I have ever seen. As the music increased in volume and force our ranks began to close up. All were eager for a good start. The Master, on his grey, was guarding the narrow strip between the wire and the wood, which would permit of one horseman passing at a time. It was everything, therefore, to be ready to take your turn.

Patiently we all waited as each second hounds were driving their fox nearer to the top corner, where a solitary man could be seen—the farmer, if I mistake not, of the land that surrounds the S.E. side of the woods.

That so wary a fox was headed didn't surprise us. What a scent in covert as hounds came back on his line on excellent terms! In full view of the lot of us he broke across the ploughed field that divides the woods—a dark brown wiry dog fox—a fox that we have run before.

Not a man spoke, not a lady whispered; merely a hand or two held up, and the Master's horn came to his lips as the leading hounds broke covert. Away now in the direction of Latton, and the two gaps to the road were full to overflowing. Down to the corner of the ploughed field, in the direction of Netteswell, rode some of the foremost who extricated themselves from the woods. The majority did not attempt to nick in with the hounds until they had left the farm and Rye Hill Common behind. Better if they had held straight on to Latton with young Mr. Hart and saved

Parndon Wood

their nags. Not a man who cut across those first three or four ploughed fields reached the Springs outside Latton with hounds.

Messrs. E. Ball and G. Sewell, who turned into the country beyond the common, were the first to snick them as they raced up the long spinney by the side of the lane to Latton Priory, and would have held an easy lead had not hounds thrown up just short of the farm. A capital cast of Bailey's to the right set us all going again, and hounds ran merrily over the grass to the Thornwood Common road, where a thick fence confronted us. "Where can you get over?" was the cry, and full gallop down the fence went everyone, headed by Mr. E. Ball, but they wheeled round *like a lot of vultures when someone spied a weak place.*

Just a little hover on the wheat before they picked it up again. Crossing the road below Mr. Nathan's, and over Mr. Symes's grass, a hat up in the direction of the Forest (Mr. Gerald Buxton's, he was riding home when the chase came galloping back on his heels) showed, what we had thought all along, that our fox meant the Forest. Running up towards Wintry

Farm, within a field of it, they turned sharp under the hedge, and crossing the road, entered the lower Forest. Right cheerily they drove along, running past the lake, and over the Epping and Ongar road, to Styles' brickfields. And here local knowledge, which means in many cases destruction, suggested keep down the road for Coopersale, and get over the line; but Mr. E. Ball, who had been going strong all day, jumping everything as it came and always ready to give a lead, did not hesitate a second and decided our wavering course as he charged up the bank and darted over the next fence, closely followed by his Reverence on the grey and a young lady* who, if we are not very much mistaken, is second to none in the county in her skill in handling a fresh mount; it is doubtful whether the grey cob ever had had a side-saddle on before.

Running in the direction of the Ongar line as hounds turned away from it towards the Union house, to which our fox seemed inclined to pay a visit before sampling Mr. Ginger's woods, we had to leave a very tempting bridge and chance our luck in getting through the woods with hounds, and emerging safely on the far side. "There is a gate in the corner," shouted the Mate, who had already reached it from another field mark, and we rode to his cry and a blind corner. I ought to have known better, seeing the number of times I have ferreted that bank. "Back," said the huntsman, while some were struggling to get through—one of the successful ones being a lady,† who was riding a remarkably clever bay. Back and jump into the covert it was, by which time the Mate had done a little bit of rail-breaking for us, simplifying the bank out of the wood, but even then the mighty groan that Cockie gave as he hoisted the 17-stone avoirdupois up the steep incline might have been heard in the next parish. But nothing would stop his Reverence now; his blood was up, and in at the finish he meant to be.

The finish was not far off, the lock of the big gate yielded to Jack's stirrup iron, while Mr. Willie Sewell in vain kept running his chestnut cob at the thick fence. "Did you feel sorry for him when he couldn't get through?" "I can't say that I did." Now we jumped into the triangular grass field in which polo ponies are wont to winter, and up to Mr. S. Fitch's farm and the rails that barred our egress. In vain did the yokels pull at them, only ceasing their efforts for a moment at Mr. Newman Gilbey's remonstance. Thinking that he was going to dismount and lend a hand, we waited hopefully. Not a bit of it; running his nag at them with all the will, and the little room he could get, for we all crowded round him, he tried to jump them. Wicked man! So he would have left us all in the lurch, would he? Thank goodness, the chestnut refused, and leaving them to their fate and the yokels' efforts, we skipped over the bank to find the Mate very busy with a roped up gate, and three, if not four, including Miss Morgan and Mr. Cook, waiting patiently for him. What a time he was to be sure; at last he succeeded, and then broke on our view one of the fairest scenes imaginable.

At the bottom of a valley of beautiful grass fields, which to the east stretched away in one long vista of undulating country, dotted with woods of fir, beech and oak, and on the west cut by the gorse-clad railway embankment, beyond which, the ground again rising, was clothed with magnificent elms, Bailey and his hounds, with their pink or dark-coated followers, were grouped round a sedgy watercourse, where, close at hand, our fox had gone to ground, having given us forty-five minutes of real enjoyment.

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* Miss Georgie Waters. † Mrs. Waters.

The season 1895-1896, which in a short two months will have waned to a close, will ever be associated in the hearts of hunting men, eh! and hunting women too (for is it not true that now almost as many ladies as men follow the pleasures of the chase), *as the one*, perhaps *the only one* in which, *if they have not prayed for a frost, they have at least admitted that for a week it would have been a welcome guest*. Horses have found no rest whatever, and the open season has found out many a weak spot in animals hitherto credited with exceptional soundness. Moderation in all things, says the Preacher, and moderation in hunting this season has brought its own reward, for the horses that have not been overdone will not fail to take their turn as the days lengthen and the work becomes harder. For it is the long days, the long hours out of the stable, that kill them.

John Archer Houblon

Perhaps there are few families in Essex to whom fox-hunters in that county are more indebted for the promotion of their interests in the pastime they enjoy than the Archer Houblons. The subject of our sketch, whose portrait is given above, is a descendant of an old Huguenot family, one of whom fled to England from Flanders in the middle of the sixteenth century to escape the persecution of the Duke of

Alva. Succeeding to his father's fine estates of Hallingbury Place in Essex and Culverthorpe Hall in Lincolnshire in 1831, during his long lifetime he always evinced the warmest interest in all that pertained to hunting not only in Essex, but over the border, for his fine coverts in Takeley Forest were equally accessible then, as they are now, to the Puckeridge and the Essex Hounds. It is fairly safe to assume that, as long as a Houblon reigns at Hallingbury Place, fox-hunting will flourish and endure in one of the fairest portions of the country over which the Essex Hounds are privileged to hunt.

Which will you have, my masters? The run in the fog, as far back as Monday week—when we met at Epping Long Green, and *hounds ran clean away from the huntsman and many who pride themselves upon never getting left behind*—or the following Wednesday, a Fyfield fixture, *when the field ran away from the hounds;* or shall I devote my energies to the description of a day in a country which, as a rule, is set apart for Monday's delectation, but which, in honour of the guests who had danced in "the morn" at Havering House, was chosen as the venue for Friday, the last day in January? In no case will my story be a long one; in any, it might have been better.

Let me start with the Monday, and you must go back to the 27th January, if you would follow me out. It was a typical scenting day for Essex—perhaps for any county—an easterly wind, laden with Scotch mist. The draw, for the fixture, an unusual one, "Nasing Coppice" generally having the first visit paid to it. Nothing like changing the method of drawing for a fox from a particular meet; it brings people up to the scratch, and offers no premium to those who like to play 'possum, and hang about covers waiting for hounds to come up. The find was a quick one, as we clustered at the top of the hill in the road that runs down between the two woods that rejoice in the name of "Balls Hill Woods." Hounds never opened, in fact they were hardly in covert, before Jack's keen glance detected a fox stealing off in the direction of the Coppice. It took the huntsman very little time to jump out of the road, whisk over the next fence, clear the wood, and lay on his hounds, and the hounds even less to run clean out of sight.

My word! how they flung to it on the grass, as they swept down one field with a will, cleared the fence in the dip, and disappeared through the one on the rising ground. In blind confidence, pinning our faith on Nasing Coppice, we all started to ride wide of them, with the exception of Mr. Peel, who rode in their wake; but we wheeled sharp to their cry as hounds bore slightly left-handed, and found Mr. Peel blocking about the only available spot in the fence, as his horse refused. We had to grope our way like children in the dark. For wire, barbed wire, flourishes and grows in rank profusion in these upland pastures, *and never was there an occasion for more dash and more devilry to be shown by those who fain would have been with hounds.* For not only were they *running on like wildfire*, but the mist on the hill grew thicker, and like dim, fleeting shadows, hounds were rapidly leaving us. There was little politeness at Mr. Peel's gap: a hasty look to see if the next man would jump on you was about all I can tell you; and the first man that came down had a horse land on each side of him as his own galloped on in the fog to slip his reins off the post he was hung upon, and disappear like a phantom in the mist.

Like a bird on the wing the huntsman was now flying on for the

coppice, and the leaders rode to keep him in sight, trusting to his instinct, his woodcraft, his marvellous skill in getting to hounds, to put them all right. A wave of his arm, as he turned just short of the spring, his ear having caught the distant chime—*that sharp, chirping note of hounds*, which *showed how* they were running on his left; (and without pulling up to listen further—it would have been of little use, for the deep, sobbing breath of galloping horses, which were thundering on behind, would have drowned any other sound) he steered for the bottom end of Deer Park, striking into the road that commands Shatter Bushes, looking in vain for pad of hound as he galloped down the steep, muddy hill, with the wood on the right. *Ah! A clue at last;* those galloping colts, with their pointed ears and long, waving tails. To the Warren for a thousand! Down hill we surged in a turbulent stream, which broke and divided as Mr. Ford Barclay turned up the bank to the left, and the huntsman and Mr. Arkwright held on their course down the lane.

Mr. Barclay was right. A man was standing at the corner fence of the first field he jumped into, who shouted, "They have just gone into Spratt's Hedgerow." Three grass fields, two flying fences, and the scene shifted. 'Twas true that hounds were not in sight, but equally comforting that those twenty or thirty sportsmen and sportswomen who were riding up the side of Spratt's Hedgerow knew where they were. And who were these lucky mortals? First, Mr. Green, of Todd's Brook. How did he get there? I know he was standing next to me when hounds found—Mr. Waltham, Mr. Avila, Mr. J. Pelly, Mrs. L. Pelly, Mr. Pemberton-Barnes, Miss Morgan, but of them more anon.

Nothing but a line of gates and sound turf, as without drawing rein we galloped on for Copped Hall, and, clattering past the house, caught the foremost of those who had been with hounds at Spratt's Hedgerow, Mr. Pemberton-Barnes, but who now lost them completely, for while he was trying to open the iron gates out of the drive to get into the park on the right, hounds had already swept over it (*not a soul with them*) into the Warren. The Master and the huntsman could now be seen coming up over the park, by which time Mr. Barnes had succeeded in opening the iron gates; but the run was virtually over, for our Chief thought it far too good a scenting day to waste in the Forest. None, however, had enjoyed that racing twenty minutes more than Mr. Waltham and Mr. Green of Todd's Brook, for none had seen more of it. But the lucky ones who caught any of its spirit, with few exceptions, were those who got away from Ball Hill with a bad start, or who rode straight up the road to Mr. Nicholl's farm.

It never rains but it pours, and if you get left behind once in a day, though it may not necessarily follow, still it need not surprise you if it happens again. Now I was not astonished, only pained, when I got left behind (will let you know whom with directly) when hounds got away in the afternoon on the top of a fox from Galley Hills; but if any one asserts that I was not the last man out of Galley Hills I shall quarrel with him. Well, if there are two men in the Hunt to whom I look up, to whose judgment I always bow, they are the Mate and the Admiral. But can I ever trust them again? The one took me up to a corner which he said was the key to the woods (*I have been looking for that key about twenty years*); the other, when I had left it, feeling uncomfortable, said, "Go back, they are drawing down that way." And back I went, when at that moment hounds were away full cry in the open.

A stern chase is a long one, but this came to an end in a flying ten minutes over a beautiful grass country, the fox just saving his brush by

getting to ground upon Mr. Charles Webster's farm, beyond Warlies Park. It was a real steeplechase all the way, and very few, besides the Master, Majors Wilson and Ricardo, Mr. Jones and Mr. Ford Barclay, were near the hounds. There is some fun, after all, in riding a stern chase, as you overhaul first one and then another. I shall start last from a covert again if ever I am short of copy and want to ride for it—you don't see all the fun from the stalls or dress-circle in the hunting-field, I can tell you—a turn in the pit must be taken occasionally. But I will let you all off for the present my brave sirs and pretty dames, although I could a tale unfold if I couldn't invent excuses as to why you were left behind.

It is one thing for hounds to run away from you, another for you to run away from them: and this is exactly what a large proportion of a big field managed to do on Wednesday, when a fox was found at Man Wood, and turned back into the covert. Hounds could not own to him, and while the huntsman was drawing back through the wood, seeking a clue, from some unexplained reason about 120 people jumped to the conclusion that as he was out of sight for some time he must have gone to Down Hall, and started off accordingly. Not finding any signs of hounds, *a panic set in, and men and women rode blindly in all directions.* The Mate set off for Row Wood, but recovered hounds—he told me going to the meet that he did not intend to let them get out of sight all day—by the greatest possible good luck just as they found in the fagot stack near Matching Park. Mr. Newman Gilbey and three others arrived just in time. A few, when the run was over—the majority (it is more than my place is worth to mention any names) went home—having missed nothing more than *a hot nineteen minutes and a kill in the open,* as hounds did not find again. Second horses (Mate's and own) were not of much use at four o'clock—they got into the stream and swam with the tide.

The gem of Friday's sport was the bright little sparkle with Mr. Harry Sworder's fox from Shalesmore (have we spelt it right this time?)—to ground at Suttons.

The *crux* of Monday's at North Weald was that owing to frost hounds never turned up.

Mr. Sheffield Neave's Staghounds.

Extraordinary sport, by hearsay and report, these hounds appear to have had all through this memorably open season. Runs long and fast have, in spite of the light going, put rider and steed to the test. So when the card said Tawney Hall, Saturday, February 8th, we soon decided which horse of those fit to go to take out. Of course, the choice fell upon the clipper that stands in the stall at the top, *for if ever you want a good horse it is with staghounds in Essex*—a horse to whom no sort of country comes amiss, bank, ditch, or rail. You may start in an open flying country, and run into the region of high and trappy banks, or you may reverse the medal on any day in the season. In any case you are safe to have to tackle—that is, if you want to be with hounds—more curious fences in one good gallop with staghounds than you would have to jump in a whole week with fox; and unless your horse can gallop and stay you had better remain at home.

It is not my intention here to draw comparisons, favourable or otherwise, between stag hunting and chasing the wily fox; still less to agree with one gentleman,* however much I may have laughed at him, who turned up at the meet at Tawney Hall and said, "Fox-hunting be hanged"—(I am not even sure that his language was not still more

* Mr. Docwra.

emphatic)—"I call it rat-hunting. Give me stag, the free and open gallop, the pace, the dash, the excitement of the rapid ride." Quite right, my friend; in part correct, for each has its place, and were I a rich man I should certainly have my one day a week with stag. I say a rich man, for though those who assert that it takes less out of a horse to have a gallop with stag than a day with fox hounds, may be quite correct, and I am rather inclined to agree with them, you certainly run much more risk of laming or killing a valuable horse; for you have no time to pick a weak place in a fence, you must take everything as it comes, the rough and the smooth, and if you take it in Essex, "Bedad," as the Irishman would say, "it's a lot of the rough you'll be getting."

Ernest Docwra's Horse "Paddy"

Nothing would persuade Mr. Docwra to let me have a photograph of himself. Was it because as an amateur photographer, and a very good one to boot, he knew too much of the process? or by reason of an innate modesty which is very conspicuous by its absence if a line of strong timber confronts him when mounted on his favourite? Mr. Docwra on this horse has probably jumped more and higher gates not excepting the great Sheffield Neave (who is a glutton for timber) than anyone in our part of the country. My advice to the tyro is never attempt to follow Mr. Docwra when it comes to timber-jumping, if he has any regard for sound collar-bones.

We all become attached to a horse that carries us well and safely with hounds. So that one fall in three seasons

was hardly likely to loosen the tie of affection which Miss Docwra feels for her favourite grey, which she fittingly sums up as "*one of the best.*"

Miss A. N. Docwra on "Larry"

TAWNEY HALL.

How I wish our hunting poet would write a ballad about Tawney Hall, whose hospitable portals are ever open to those who follow the fox, the stag or the hare. Beagles and fox terriers are not denied—are they, Miss Georgie? Surely, if ever a sportsman deserved a testimonial from hunting men, Mr. Harry Sworder is the man. "Bedad," as the Irishman would again remark, "sure, if he lives long enough, he shall have one, for it's myself that will be getting it up and sharing it with him. More power to his honour, and bless him."

Now there was room for us all at the festive board, and bread, cheese and good beef were done ample justice to, and like giants refreshed, we sallied out for our ride. You may depend upon it, you don't go any the worse for that preliminary snack; you may call it jumping powder, or what you like, I call it staying power; but its chief charm, in my mind, is the friendly feeling, the *camaraderie* it engenders. This, then, is another of the reasons why we like stag hunting.

An untried deer, fat as butter—*the fatter they are the better they go;* perhaps you didn't know that, my charming young lady—was given the usual law, and a capital view we fox-hunters got of him (stag-hunters never look), as, with proud disdain he trod the ling, inhaled the breeze, and cantering up to the fence, leisurely topped it, and disappeared. As he ran up the hill by the side of Mr. C. Fitch's plantation, at the top of which, unknown to us, he had harboured, and here, as we rode to hounds, at a fast hand-gallop, we came up to him. In full view of the pack he broke covert, and running through Knightsland (we went through the bridle gate three at a time), crossed the road to the right of the keeper's lodge, getting on the grass beyond Berwick Lane. Hounds went a splitter, I can tell you, from here to the end of the run at Kelvedon Common, running in view all the way. We could hold hounds, and only just hold them, as they flew by Mr. Freeman's and raced down to the river, but by the time we had followed Messrs. Waltham, Sworder and Avila over the ford, they were lost to sight, to memory dear—in other words, they had gone, flown, vanished into thin air, our only clue to recovery being a distant halloa, or a solitary hedger frantically waving his arms as he indicated the line hounds and their quarry had taken.

Clear of the ford, we galloped on without drawing rein :

> "The bay he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
> But the red mare played with the snaffle bars, as a maiden plays with a glove."

Messrs. Waltham and Sworder leading, and so over the rails into the Navestock Springs and out over some more, we stretched away for Dudbrook over clean galloping pastures of soundest turf. Why did we fumble at that gate out of the second one, Mr. Sworder ? I agree with you that it lost us the remainder of the gallop, for as it flew open Mr. Sheffield Neave had swung over the rails at the side, and he immediately turned sharp to the left, his quick ear having caught the sound of hounds running in that direction. The bullocks galloping towards Navestock Hall on the right pointed to a clue, and led to defeat, for true as it might have been, as we subsequently ascertained it was, that the deer had turned to the right for the lake, he never soiled, and came back at such a pace, being closely pressed by hounds, that he was already coming along behind the belt of trees running down to Mr. Stiell's house at the time we were hesitating which side to go.

The Master, Mr. Waltham, and Mr. Pemberton-Barnes caught hounds as they swept over the road and the pastures for Bois Hall. Mr. Waltham, however, pulled up, having vowed before he started only to go for a few miles, as he wanted his horse for Monday; but had he known how very soon the deer would be taken he would most certainly have held on. The whole thing must have been over in about thirty minutes; the end I did not see; having got on the road and being hopelessly out of it, I resigned myself to my fate. Those, however, who had taken an equally bad turn and who went galloping on after Messrs. Sworder and Avila, came up in time for the capture.

Now, from Kelvedon Common, Navestock, to Galley Hill, Waltham Abbey, is a far cry; but at 4.30 I found myself riding to harriers in full chorus in that country, and learnt all about the day's sport they had had from their meet at Mead Gate, Nasing, in the early morning. A long day, with plenty of hares and very little scent until the afternoon, the common verdict. But, by general consent, a very nice little run over the grass at the close of the proceedings.

Foxhounds at North Weald.—No scent and no sport in the morning

owing to a fog, but a capital run in the afternoon from Garnish Hall fagot stack when the fog lifted; we listened in keen anticipation for the yap-yap of the terriers, for given a fox we were pretty sure of a gallop on the grass. A fox, did I say? There were two, and if one doubled back into the heap of sticks when the boys yelled at him, the other, a fine yellow fox, went away with the Essex lady pack at his heels. Sharp up the hill he turned after we had cleared the farm buildings and flown the first bank. Mr. John Tyndale White deftly opened the gate into the next field, a ploughed one, about the only arable one encountered in the next hot ten minutes, in which men—eh, and women too (there were twenty-three out)—tackled to work like schoolboys to play, as taking each fence in their stride they flew from pasture to pasture.

At the top of the hill, to the right of Coopersale Hall by South's house, there was a momentary falter—nothing more—before hounds were driving on again in the direction of Stonard's Farm, down to the brook that runs by the side of the road (*the boundary line, if I am not much mistaken, of the future urban district of Epping*). The gate was locked that led to the bridge. Sideways Mr. Sworder's black would go, but look at the creep down place and jump over the bottom he wouldn't until Mrs. Willie Sewell showed him the way. Jumping out of the road on to grass again there was time to take stock of those who had been quickest in this quick thing. Ongar and Epping were going very strong, Major Carter and Mr. Howel Price leading a considerable contingent on the right. Mr. and Mrs. Willie Sewell, 'faith! they were riding as well and keenly across the country as they did in the hold-fast races of the West Essex and Stansted polo sports. They, and Mr. Frank Ball, with a clear lead of every one on the left, in about this order they went in and out of Stew Green Lane, and if the place into it was bad, the one out with the tree stump half way up the bank was much worse.

Running close up to Mr. Sam Fitch's house they turned sharp to the right over the Coopersale road. Running through the policies near the house, up to the line, the Mate was off his horse and had the gate off its hinges in a trice, but hounds turned back past the Vicarage into the Forest. Through the Forest and Gaynes Park hounds ran like wild fire, and you had to keep galloping all the time to keep them in touch as they drove on through the woods for Beachetts. Running the length of that covert, and on to Shalesmore, where the run was virtually over—a capital forty-five minutes—our fox went over the river, viewed by the cottagers near the ford where we crossed, but hounds never got on terms again, in spite of the huntsman's bold forward cast to Battle's Hall, which was right after all.

Mr. Sheffield Neave's Staghounds.

Another Saturday, this time at Bobbingworth windmill, the date February 15th, the country rapidly drying and banks hardening under the influence of the abnormal February weather. But all the same a perfect hunting day, with dull grey sky and a snap of east in the wind sufficient for scent.

Of course Saturday is not the day *par excellence* for sport with these hounds; you must go out on a Tuesday to see them at their best (let me once more remind you to pick out your horse), but if you go on a Saturday you may rely on good fun. You are assured of a gallop; it may not be straight, but it will cover a point rarely ever touched by foxhounds in a season or harriers in a lifetime. Saturday is generally chosen for untried deer, with the certain result that if they will face the upstanding fences

which are associated with the Saturday country, they are reserved for the honours of a Tuesday meet.

Now, the hind that was enlarged in the grass meadows at the back of Bobbingworth Hall Farm (Mr. George Brown's), with ordinary luck, is likely to show some very good sport in the future, for not only did she evince the strongest dislike to being caught, going on again and again when we thought she would be taken, but she showed no inclination whatever to run the road, which latter proceeding, however much it might have enhanced her value according to report in the eyes of a M.S.H. over the border, would have found no favour with Mr. Sheffield Neave.

Ten minutes from the time of laying on the pack (ten couples) we were down at the river below Nether Hall, Moreton, Mr. Tyndale White acting as pioneer. Crossing it, she came back in full view, hounds close at her, for the Blake Hall coverts, and, getting down again to the water, below Water End Farm, crossed and recrossed before finally going away for Forest Hall. We had been running just twenty minutes when she broke back from the Osiers for Mr. Gibson's Farm. Crossing the Truant School-road she shook off the hounds without any difficulty, bringing them to their noses before we splashed through the river to the right of Water End. Running past this farm she turned over the road, and in a few minutes, after diving through the railway arch, we found ourselves in the lane above Greensted Wood. Leaving this covert left-handed, she pointed for Kettlebury Springs, but came along the meadows up to the Ongar cricket ground, Miss Docwra, as she jumped into the road, having a near shave of coming down—we had now been running fifty-five minutes, and the four ladies (Mrs. Upton, Mrs. Frank Ball, Miss Jones, and Miss Docwra) who had started with us were well up.

The cream of the run as regards the riding part of it may be said to have been over when we reached Ongar Town, for only those who were super-keen to see the deer taken cared to follow Mr. Sheffield Neave in the cold-blooded casts he made to accomplish it. But one man,* who had come all the way from Glasgow, did not mean to be denied. He was riding one of his father's best horses, and for him gardens, recreation grounds, rivers, brick walls, and barbed wire had no terrors, and in at the take he meant to be. No less keen and equally determined was a youngster† who has developed into one of the keenest sportsmen in County Essex, and for slipping off his horse to open an obstinate gate he earns the cake. Three others complete the list, one of them,‡ the boldest gate-jumper in Essex, his latest performance in that line being one on the swing, which brought him and his horse down; but merely remarking it would do the beggar good, he gave him a couple more (not on the swing), immediately afterwards. I should not mind backing my man for a pony, owners up, against any other timber-smasher in the county.

The honours, however, of the last twenty minutes of this most excellent run of two hours certainly rested with "Daylight," who from Ongar Town to Blake Hall unravelled the line and led up to the take.

> "Long may the hound live so priceless in value
> To point out the line when the pack are at fault.
> With Daylight in front, we need scarcely remind you,
> The sun must go down ere he comes to a halt."

There were no lack of spectators or volunteers to assist at the take in the

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* Mr. F. Jones. (He volunteered for the front in '99.)
† Mr. John Tyndale White. (He also volunteered for the front in '99.) ‡ Mr. Docwra.

deep pond behind the house. The local policeman was all there. Mr. Millbank, on foot, arrived in time, and as for the maids, with their rosy faces and snowy aprons, they had quite a field-day. Homeward bound we fell in with Mr. Barclay's harriers, and learnt that they had had a most excellent day's sport, killing no less than three hares, a bigger field than usual being attracted by this popular pack to a popular meet, Thornwood Common, all of whom were most hospitably entertained by that *King of Sportsmen*, Mr. George Hart.

Mrs. Upton and her favourite hunter "Fairyland"

Writing in '97, Mrs. Upton says:—"I have hunted 'Fairyland' for ten seasons (and well may she have added), I love him; I am so grateful to him for the many happy days he has given me, and hope that only death will part us." Not to have been fond of a horse like "Fairyland" would have been a confession that something was wanted that 'twere ill fortune to have been without. The highest rails, the stiffest banks, who ever saw "Fairyland" turn aside? Rarely did he ever make a mistake. I only remember one in the Kelvedon country, and with his great pace and extraordinary jumping and

staying powers, steered by one to whom fear was a stranger, it was no matter for surprise that when hounds ran hard 'Fairyland" was a guiding star for those who rode to keep the first flight in view.

SHROVE TUESDAY.

By far the best item of news to those not in the know: that the Mastership of the Essex Hounds is not to change hands. Seeing the number of countries that are becoming vacant at the end of the season, we may heartily congratulate ourselves. For under the present *régime* we have had undeniably good sport, and it is to be sincerely hoped, in the interest of fox-hunting in West Essex, that the two Masters who now carry the horn will continue to do so for many years to come. It behoves their supporters, however, in different parts of the country to stir themselves before the advent of another season in the matter of dealing with the barbed wire, which is slowly but gradually increasing.

Both our chiefs were out on Tuesday, and also Mrs. Bowlby and Mrs. Arkwright. Mr. R. Lockwood paid a visit to his old country. I am sorry that he did not have a better day; he was mounted on a very good horse belonging to Mr. E. Ball, who with his brother and Mr. Frank Ball were among those out. But I may as well give you the list, which with the near approach of the end of the season is not likely to grow any smaller. We have only two M.P.'s, I believe, who hunt with our hounds. They are both doing their duty to their constituents and their country. A member, however, for one of the northern divisions was with us (Mr. Pease), but he sails under a different flag to our Unionist members. A fair number of ladies, if not quite so many as usual, lent grace and charm to the gathering of the clans: The Misses Blyth (three), the Misses Bowlby (two), Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Pemberton-Barnes, Mrs. Bruce, Miss C. Buxton, Mrs. Carter, Miss Colvin, Mrs. Howard Fowler, Mrs. Neill, Miss Peel, Mrs. L. Pelly, Mrs. Redwood, Mrs. Sewell, Mrs. Waters. Of the sterner sex we noted the following representatives: General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Mr. Avila, Mr. Baddeley, Mr. Ford Barclay, Mr. Basham, Capt. Bruce, Mr. C. J. Bury, Mr. Ralph Bury, Major Carter, Mr. S. Caldwell, Mr. P. M. Evans, Mr. Howard Fowler, Mr. S. Fitch, Mr. N. Gilbey, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. Green (of Todd's Brook), Messrs. Gold (two), Mr. Galloway, Mr. D. Gregory, Mr. Harrison, Mr. G. Hart, Mr. Hart, jun., Mr. W. Horner, Mr. Duke Horner, Mr. H. W. Lee, Dr. Love, Mr. Loyd, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Messrs. Lobb (two), Mr. H. J. Miller, Mr. Morris, Mr. Patchett, Q.C., Mr. A. Peel, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Messrs. Sewell (three), Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. A. R. Steele and brother, Mr. Swire, Mr. R. S. Tilling, Mr. Todhunter, and Mr. Waltham.

If those not with us would know what took place on this particular day I may tell them that we rode briskly and hopefully through the dull dry fog, which an easterly breeze swept over a country which is rapidly becoming as parched and adust as a March-dried scene, for the country we rode through is one of our fairest. No barbed wire lurks in sinuous and deadly coils, and any moment we expected to be away on the top of a Tattle Bush, Roydon, Pinnacles, Parndon Hall, Weir Hatch, or Mark Hall fox. In a bunch we found them at Harlow Park, and came away with a good one over a delightful country, and we skirmished with a broad front over pasture and plough when the Latton coverts had been left, as we rode southwards to Epping. But a good fox made the best of a good start, and leisurely doubling back through the grass fields behind the local Brewery,

he threaded his way back over the Bury Farm, while the huntsman was making a forward and fruitless cast through the Lower Forest.

All this between the hours of 1 and 2 p.m. For two and-a-half-hours more we rode the country, and while we rode we gradually chilled, for we never found again, and gladly we galloped home for the fireside, tea, and hot muffins, his Reverence on the grey having rather the best of the race in the final spurt across the Plain.

Rev. G. Ward Saunders on "Cockie"

This good horse, formerly the property of Mr. Arthur C. Balloch, came into the writer's possession as a gift (he has never looked in his mouth), when Mr. Balloch left Essex, on condition that he found him a kind home. The horse, it will be admitted, looks fairly contented, but is never so happy as he was when carrying Mr. Saunders on the one or two rare days he could snatch with hounds from his busy round of work in a large London suburb.

The Essex Union.

I am almost afraid to conjecture the number of years that have elapsed since I last had the pleasure of a day with this noted pack, but methinks

that it can have been little short of ten. Saturday last was not an inviting day to go out hunting with any hounds, still less to embark on a long journey in a strange country; but one's curiosity had been excited, and appetite whetted, by the graphic and glowing accounts of a wonderful hunting run of three-and-a-half hours' duration, which had taken place a fortnight previously from one of the coverts, which it was whispered would probably be drawn on the day in question. So that it only required the extra inducement that two of the best sportsmen in the Essex Hunt, one of whom, Mr. Harry Sworder, had played a prominent part in the big run already alluded to, intended to have another look at them, to settle one's determination; a determination which was not to be shaken by a falling glass and blue mist, a combination so fatal to scent in the Essex country.

What do you know about scent? Nobody knows anything about scent, cries the wise man and the still wiser woman; but will these wiseacres kindly make a note of the first good scenting day that comes under their observation under the conditions named? Do not mistake them, a tumbling glass and a blue mist.

Thus it was with a keen appreciation of the situation that found us at 9 a.m. bowling along behind a swift cob for the meet at Hutton Checkers, some fourteen miles distant. The rain, which at first came down in a gentle mist, soon commenced falling in right earnest, but it was warm and it was welcome, for who but the wiseacres could tell but that on the dry ground every splash might be so much sticking-plaster for the scent to cling to.

Has not this month of months for hunting been robbed of nearly all its charm in our Essex county? I am not now alluding to the Union county, which is always very much wetter than our own, owing to the dry state of the ground and the non-fulfilment of the old adage, "February fill dyke."

Arriving in good time at the meet in company with a member of the E.U.H., one, who in former days was a first flighter with the E.H., there was time to take stock of the hounds and have a chat with the huntsman. The veriest tyro would soon have discovered what a keen lover of hounds he was as he pointed with pride to several of his favourites, a young hound, one of the Pytchley "Paradox" strain particularly taking my fancy. A beautiful bitch, "Saintless" by name, but with one fault, which I need not point out, would attract notice on any flags; but for that one fault she would never have come into a plough country. Taking the 16½ couple of hounds altogether, they looked as they undeniably are, a lot of real workmen—the dogs, it was a mixed pack, being fine slashing hounds, capable of putting in a good hard day's work over the stiff clays of the Essex Union country. Of course they were a bit fine-drawn, but what pack is not just now; hounds, like horses and men, have had no rest, and as Goddard said, they have been right at it since September.

A liberal ten minutes was allowed for tardy arrivals, and a big batch of late comers took advantage of what is evidently a recognised custom; and a meet, which at first was of the smallest dimensions on our first arriving, was soon swelled into a gathering of a very respectable size, about a hundred, by the time we moved off to draw the first covert.

A good many faces of those who had come out, and who were not to be deterred by the elements, were familiar to me, but my friend kindly pointed out all the local celebrities, and this enables me to give you the following list:—The Master, Col. Hornby; Messrs. Courage (3), Miss Courage, Mr. Horton, Mr. Kemble (the Father of the Hunt), Capt. Digby Neave, Col. Wood and Son, Mr. Craig, Mr. Haydon Corser, Capt. Tufnell, Mr. Heseltine, Mr. Helme, Mr. Barclay, Col. Maguire, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Coverdale,

A Meet of The Essex Union at Vineyards, Great Baddow, the seat of D. Cecil Gibbs, Esq., on January 23rd, 1896

Hopkins Miss Tawke Goddard Col. Hornby, M.F.H. A. Land
Markland Barnard Mr. Von Luecke Mr. Cave Capt. Horatio Kemble Mr. Creagh

Dr. Carter, Mr. Whitmore, M.H., Mr. Tweed, Mr. Hilton, Mr. Dalton, Mr. A. Darby, Messrs. Bligh and Gardiner; several ladies, including Misses Johnson, Mrs. and Miss Temperley, Miss Garden.

Within a short distance of the meet hounds were thrown into Ingrave Hall Wood (the property of Capt. Digby Neave, who is one of the staunchest preservers of foxes and chief pillars of the Essex Union Hunt), dashing in with ready eagerness at the huntsman's cheer—a cheer with a beautiful ring about it, as we could hear for ourselves as it came floating back to us as we plunged into what appeared to be the main ride of the covert.

Mr. W. Gardiner is one of the best known men with the Union; a man, they tell me, who is always there, be it long or be it short, be it slow or be it fast, with a perfect knowledge of the country and the line of a fox; a good horseman, never jumping unless compelled, no wonder that the broad of his back is a beacon for so many of the followers of the Union Hunt when the big dogs are away with a slashing scent over the stiff Essex Union country. Well, it was Mr. Gardiner who dashed up a side ride, and it was his halloa, methinks, that so shortly brought the huntsman galloping back up the hock-deep path, as the hounds flew forward to the cry.

Right about turn, and we struggled out of that ride as best we could, but the pack had cleared the wood two fields to the good before half of us were able to set to work to try and catch them over about a bit of the heaviest going I ever came across. It is a well-known field, I believe, and would be none the worse if it had a year's sun on it without any rain. Perhaps it was as well for some of us that scent was not holding, and that hounds got on the lines of the vixen instead of the dog, otherwise we might never have caught them. With indifferent scent, the field held well in hand by the Master, after some most patient hound work the vixen was run to ground in a drain.

In the way of fencing there was very little to diversify the proceedings, but one ugly bottom towards the end of this little hunt was first flown by a gentleman on a fine blood-like chestnut, whom I had previously spotted as a customer in spite of his silvered hair; and I envied him his nerve, but did not wonder at it when I was told the profession he belonged to, looking every inch a soldier. I am afraid that I must disappoint that warlike section of our race—which has no warmer admirer than myself—perhaps incur their wrath, by saying that I cannot recall any soldier with silvered locks who can carry them to the front like Dr. Carter, who, in his prime, I am assured, with Saunders and Barker, formed one of a trio who could hold their own against all comers—quite the "Osbaldistons and Rosses" of the south.

A long draw in your own country without finding is, of all things, the most wearisome process known to mortal man, unless you can get up a flirtation, a thing unheard of in the hunting-field. But, in a strange land, it offers endless charm and variety to a lover of nature as each minute opens up some fresh view, some lovely vista of charming woodland scenery. To an eye never tired of gazing on a fresh landscape what can be more delightful; for the country we rode through was not flat, and the chains of woods, of small dimensions, were nearly all begirt with emerald pastures. But the fairest scene of all was reserved for the last. The wind had risen slightly, and upon the eminence we stood upon it made itself felt as we saw hounds thrown into Bottledown Hill Wood to draw it up wind. It was getting late, too, close on 4 p.m., but we cared not; for the picture we gazed upon had little of the flatness associated with the county of Essex or the vaunted Roothings, and to my mind was infinitely more attractive and more sporting.

Goddard
Foundling, Artless, Testy
Sanguine Segment
Notable

Hopkins
Wilful, Reason, Folly
Tremor, Gamesom
Duchess

Cecil Armstrong Gibbs
Gaiety
Fortress, Tragedy, Dareful
Gleeful Gandy

A. Land
Dauntless

Standing on the road on the top of the hill, we had a fine uninterrupted view across the beautiful valley of fair pasture, varied with a few arable fields that stretched down one long gradual slope of some mile in length, to flow on and then rise in almost imperceptible gradations until lost on the distant heights of Laindon Hills, and with only one dark wood set in the heart of the valley, of size sufficient to give horses their wind (if a fox chose that line) as they galloped parallel with it with hounds driving forward in maddening chorus. What a perfect line for a run! Hearts beat high and expectations rose at the very thought of such a treat e'en while some of our party wondered—Mr. H. J. Miller was one—whether we should ever get there, to that distant church clearly discernible as it cut the horizon in the far distance. Time passed slowly, but surely. Not a whimper. Few, if any, of the field had gone home, for those who come out with the Essex Union are a very keen lot. Not a sign, and with something like a sigh of despair we waited to see the twin covert on the adjoining hill drawn before bidding farewell to our sporting neighbours. How patiently the huntsman had drawn the covert, how well the hounds worked through it! We could see them coming on in front of him well spread out. It was a pretty sight, for, as he rode down one of the deep coombes in the wood, his pink coat was the only vestige of colour against the purple and russet-brown of the trees.

Now our hopes rose high at the mention of Park Hill Wood, for it was said to be a certainty, but at this time of year how often the best coverts disappoint us! Leaving the road to follow Mr. Helme to a corner of the wood, we had scarcely reached it before a scream sent the blood boiling and leaping through our veins. Like Sail a-hoy! to a shipwrecked mariner, so is the scream that proclaims a fox afoot to the ardent fox-hunter, when covert after covert has been called upon in vain, he reaches the last to be tried, the forlorn hope. Pasture and plough, up hill and down, divided this covert from the last one drawn, and parallel with both ran the road, and to this we made as hounds, with the huntsman close to them, went flying across.

At the bottom of the deep wood hounds were at fault until Goddard cheered them over the road, and for a few fields they ran and ran well, and no one would have headed the huntsman had they run on, for he got to them like lightning, and the fences that we encountered had few weak places in them, I can inform you. It was a case of first come first served, and the fairies help you if anyone got down at the only available spot. It takes a fair fence to put "the Cat" down, but before the end of the run we saw him in difficulties as his bold rider pushed him along on his own line. Were we not on the vixen again? It looked like it (for we knew a brace of foxes had been seen in Park Wood), as hounds came back, making a most curious twist up to Little Burstead church, to turn again and carry on the line for some distance beyond it, where, as the hour was getting late, with a ride of some eighteen miles before us, we reluctantly had to leave Goddard to puzzle it out, but scent has to be very bad and the fox very wary to escape him.

Essex Union men speak most enthusiastically of their Master and their huntsman; the oldest of them affirm that they can never recall such a good season as the one that is so rapidly approaching a close—a truly great performance, considering the huntsman has been practically half the time without the assistance of a first whip owing to illness. Another fortnight, they say, will see the curtain fall in the Union country. So I am afraid there is little chance of another day with them. We were much struck by the order that prevailed in the field, by the care exercised to

avoid riding over seeds and wheat, and pleasurably surprised at the scarcity of barbed wire, only one strand being encountered throughout the day; but that, we must confess, made our blood curdle, for it was a veritable death-trap, festooned in a hedge at the right height to catch you, or your horse across the throat.

Last, but not least, we were exceedingly gratified at the hearty welcome extended to us by the members of the Hunt, the hunt button of a neighbouring pack being sufficient passport in their eyes for a day, or, perhaps, two, during a season without bringing out your cheque book. Riding home we passed Thorndon Hall, the seat of Lord Petre, one of the most, if not the most, beautiful places we have seen in Essex. Everything about it old and good; we did not look in vain for the deer browsing under the magnificent trees that studded the park.

It was over this park, and the stone wall that surrounds it, that the fox made his way in the memorable run of two weeks previous. Mr. Sworder pointed out the line he subsequently took to our wistful visions, but he had been at it all day. There wasn't a covert, scarce a field, certainly not a brook, which some time or other in this historic run of three-and-a-half hours, covering some eighteen miles of country, which they had not crossed. One brook in particular he could vividly recall, having just got over by the skin of his teeth; his two immediate followers, first they would and then they wouldn't, but, suddenly making up their minds, rushed at it together, cannoned, went in, and by the sounds he heard Kilkenny cats were not in it (I don't mean the brook). Home at eight, the longest day for many a week, but, in spite of the rain, ever to be recalled as a very happy one.

The Essex Point-to-Point Races were held on Saturday, March 7th, at Canes, near Harlow, in anything but propitious weather, for rain fell steadily from start to finish of the proceedings.

There had been some talk at first of having the races in the neighbourhood of Coopersale, but difficulties having arisen in obtaining a course. Mr. George Hart with his usual generosity and kindness, came to the rescue and allowed the executive to chose a line over his land, which with his (Mr. Hart's) matured judgment, they were enabled to do so effectually that it was acknowledged to be about the best one ever selected for a point-to-point in Essex, not only from a spectacular point of view, but from the competitors' point of interest as well.

The starting-place, a grass field touching Harlow Road, commanded a view of nearly the whole of the course, which ran out for about a mile and a half to a white flag in the distance; the competitors being only hidden from view for about a minute as they dipped over a hill near the turning point. Most of the carriage folk took up their position in this field, and although they did their best to conceal their identity with mackintoshes and umbrellas, we managed to distinguish the following, viz.:—

Driving.—Mr. and Mrs. Bowlby, Col. Lockwood, M.P., Mr. Robert Lockwood and party, Mr. Fred Green and party, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Buxton and party, Mrs. C. Green, the Misses Jones and Miss Fane, Mrs. Jump and party, Mrs. Howel Price, Mrs. Ricardo, Mr. and Miss Pearson, Miss Archer Houblon, Mrs. Carter, Mr. Wahab, Mr. and Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Crocker, Mr. and Mrs. Flint, Mr. E. Pelly, Mrs. N. Gilbey, Mrs. Nicholson, Mr. and Mrs. Parkes, Miss Savill, Miss Sewell, Mr. H. B. Yerburgh and party, Miss and Messrs. Lobb, Lord Rookwood, Mrs. Mackintosh and the Misses Maitland.

Riding.—Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright, Mr. Baddeley, Mr. George Brown, Mr. W. Buckmaster, Mr. E. Ball, Mr. and Mrs. R. Ball, Mr. Ford

Barclay, Mr. and Mrs. Barnes, Mr. Basham, Mrs. Bennett, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. and Miss Bagot, the Misses Blyth (3), Mr. A. Blyth, Mr. C. J. Bury, Mr. G. Buxton, the Misses Buxton (3), Messrs. Carr (2), Major Carter, Messrs. Christy (2), Mr. Cockett, Mr. C. Collin, Mr. Cook, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Dalton, Mr. G. Dawson, Mr. N. Dawson, Mr. and Miss Docwra, Mr. S. Fitch, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Fowler, Mr. G. Gilbey, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. G. Gold, Miss Gilbey, Mr. C. E. Green, Miss M. Green, Mr. Green (Todds Brook), Mr. Harrison, Mr. and Mrs. R. Hill, Mr. George Hart and Sons, Mr. H. W. Horner, Mr. Hull, jun., Miss Jones, Mr. P. S. Lee, Mr. H. W. Lee, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Miss Morgan and Miss M. Morgan, Mr. Morris, Mr. H. J. Miller, Mrs. Neill, Mr. A. J. New and two sons, Mr. W. Nicholson, Mr. A. C. Oldham, Mr. A. Peel and Misses Peel, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Mr. and Mrs. L. Pelly, Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. E. Quare, Miss Quare, Mrs. Radford, Mr. H. Savill, Mr. C. Savill, Mr. and Mrs. W. Sewell, Messrs. G. and A. Sewell, Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. A. R. Steele and Miss Steele, Mr. D. Cunliffe Smith, Mr. J. Swire, Mr. Tabor, Mr. R. S. Tilling, Mr. Tweed, Mr. Tufnell, Mr. Tower, Mr., Mrs., and Miss Waters, Major and Mrs. Wilson, General Sir E. Wood, Mr. Waltham, Capt. Cairns, Dr. Love, Miss Colvin, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Tossetti, Mr. Tresham Gilbey, Mr. Avila, Mr. Caldwell, Mr. A. Bowlby, Mr. Digby Maitland, Mr. Singie, Mr. Willis, Mr. Roddick, and Mr. Chapman.

No less than fifteen faced the starter in the red-coat welter for the ten-pound cup and the laurel leaves, but an additional interest was lent to this race on its becoming known that two of the most stalwart competitors* had a private match on the result, which was to decide the merit of their steeds and the temper of their own steel. The amount of the wager varying from one sovereign to a hundred pounds, more likely the former, but it cost one of the rivals about £20 for outfit, what with racing togs and saddlery, to say nothing of many hours of severe training to reduce his weight. This, with lenten fare, however, had the desired result, and he arrived at the post as fit as a fiddle, and going to scale very few ounces overweight in his 7lb. saddle.

"Duchess," a previous winner of this race two years in succession (last year she was laid by owing to an accident from barbed wire), was made a hot favourite. Jumping out of the first field—a ploughed one—over a small drop, she made a nasty peck; but her rider, Mr. G. Sewell, recovering her well, held a straight course of his own on the right, apparently going too far in that direction. On the left Capt. Ricardo on his grey shot at once to the front, and began cutting out the work, Mr. Jones and Mr. Price, still more on the left, laying well up, with Mr. Pemberton-Barnes between them carving out a strong line of his own. In something like this order they came down to the brook in a line, and those who were looking on said that it was about as pretty a sight as you could imagine, this heavy-weight race, as the eight or nine leaders, piercing the fences abreast, charged down with a rush and an open front at the brook and took it in their stride, and few indeed hit it off at a small place.

The truth is that those who picked out the course expected the riders would come at the brook much more on the left, where it was a much fairer and easier jump. This plan, however, was entirely frustrated by the orders given by Lord Rookwood at starting to leave a certain pond on the left instead of on the right, the consequence being that they all came

* M. H. J. Price and Mr. F. Barclay.

at the brook in its widest place. The widest place, however, when it comes to be tested with a tape, grows wonderfully and beautifully less, and jumps of 25ft., 18ft., and any number of odd inches, are reduced to something considerably under. We have taken the trouble to run the foot rule over the string, so speak by the book.

"Duchess" appears to have made about the biggest jump, as, taking off a good yard before it, she landed easily over the 14½ *ft. of space between the banks*, stiff stubs, 3ft. or 4ft. high on the taking off side, necessitating her taking off so much in front. Mr. Barnes, under a tree, cleared nearly the same distance, and others were equally good; but there was *one easy place, over which the rearguard blobbed in single file*, and this place Mr. Hart, with ready foresight for the spectators' interests, had promptly made up with long upright bushes, giving it a most hirsute appearance before the next race was run, the result being that when Mr. Arkwright, who was following in the tracks previously made, came at it he had suddenly to swerve to the right, and this consequently jammed a lot of us together and helped to bring three down.

Beyond the brook was a teazer, both Mr. George Hart and Mr. George Brown agreeing that it was as stiff a fence as any in the course, a high narrow bank offering no purchase, with wide ditch beyond, into the plough, and rather an uphill run at it. Going round the flag for home, Capt. Ricardo still held a lead, and only lost it after landing over the last fence, when he was collared by Mr. Jones—rather bad luck for him after cutting out all the work. Mr. Jones, however, had a near shave of coming down on the return journey, his horse only just getting over what at first sight appeared to be a very wide place in the brook, as it was not bushed up in front, but on measurement was only 12½ ft. from bank to bank and 14½ ft. as his horse jumped. It was *too much, however, for the next comer*, Mr. Howel J. Price, whose horse, taking off a yard too soon, jumped into the middle, and this probably lost him his match with Mr. Ford Barclay, for he had to come out on the wrong side and go at it again. However, I cannot speak positively about this, for Mr. Barclay had made up his mind to ride a waiting race, and allowing Mr. Price's horse, who had had just about enough, to stagger over the last fence in front of him, he came along with a wet sail, winning fairly easily amid great excitement and roars of "*Go it, Price,*" "*Go it, Barclay.*" Mr. R. Hill was third, a place that "Duchess" would easily have held had she not fallen at the last fence, a most trappy and dangerous one to have at the finish of a long and punishing course, up hill, out of plough, ditch to you, and a bank well lined with stubs. *With this exception,* as I have previously remarked, the course was admitted to have been a perfect one.

Mr. Jones's win in the heavy-weight was a most popular, if unlooked-for, event. That a man about 55 years of age, a J.P., late C.C., and father of a large family, should succeed in cutting down all the young bloods, with their silk caps, patent boots, and racing tits, was something to be proud of. Riding a good, generous animal, one that his daughter generally hunts, bred in Essex, boasting an Essex sire, Sir W. Gilbey's "Pedometer," and bought at a sale for a mere song, he was heartily congratulated on all sides, and deservedly so. He rode straight, as he always does, taking his own line, and won in a common canter. Bravo, Jones! "for you are about the only one of the Old Guard" who rode in the point-to-points of thirteen or fourteen years ago who can still keep up the traditions. For it is a curious fact that of those who did compete in those days there were only two amongst the twenty-eight riders in '96. Mr. Pemberton-Barnes was alive, but had not commenced riding in point-to-

points until some began to think about leaving off. "Truly the old order changeth, giving place to new."

Riding in the second race, in which thirteen started, one or two things struck one which I should like to jot down. The first observation applies equally to both races, viz., the nondescript attire of the competitors. How is it men are allowed to compete in red-coat races in mufti costume, billy-cock hats, red or yellow silk caps, brown gaiters, or anything? It is to be hoped that the executive will make a note for future occasions, and insist that pink coats must be worn. If you want a light one, a red serge, which looks orthodox, only weighs a half-pound. Then may I suggest that it seems very unfair to allow the same man to ride in the Heavy, Light, and Farmers' race. To start with, a point-to-point in which you are not

"Spitfire"

supposed to know a yard of the country beforehand is robbed of all its charm when this is allowed, and a man who has been over the course in a previous race has an obvious advantage over those who have not. Lastly, may I submit that if the races cannot be run together, it would be far better to have the light-weight first. It stands to reason they will not make so many holes in the fences. It was the holes in the fences and the tracks of the heavy brigade that caused the light-weights to run so much together. They started off at a great pace, much too fast to last, Mr. Caldwell making the running with Mr. Arkwright close at hand. Mr. Caldwell's horse refused at the third or fourth fence, the same where "Spitfire" whipped round. Mr. Arkwright shot to the front and led round the flag, being passed by Major Carter as he came round it. What order they ran in afterwards I am unable to say, for with injunctions not to ride my mount out if there was no chance of winning, and having been badly thrown out by three men coming down in front of me at the brook, I merely cantered round over the course, and a very pretty one it was, certainly about the stiffest I have ever ridden over in a point-to-point.

The brook was by no means the worst obstacle that was encountered; the bank already alluded to, and another very similar to it beyond the second brook, required a lot of doing — there being no purchase for a horse's foot, the lot had to be flown. *It was a course which a Leicestershire horse, who had never seen a bank in his life, would have stood a better chance over than the ordinary Essex hunter.* But they were *not the ordinary* Essex hunters that ran in this race, but animals that could hold their own in any country in England. For I have always maintained that *a good Essex hunter can go in any country;* and we all know how quite recently, in the cream of the cream and shire of the shires, some pretty good prices were bidden for horses that ran in these point-to-point races, but which although they ran are not good enough to win.

To continue my description of the course after this long digression, a rail-guarded fence on the way home near the Cottage would not stand trifling with, but wanted a leap of some 15 feet to land you clear over the ditch on the far side. The bank out of the Cottage lane before holes were knocked in the fence on the top of it by the heavies was no trifle, and ripped up the girths of Mr. Price's horse as he grazed the stiff stakes on the top of it. The brook on the way home was nothing if you hit it off where a man waved his cap to show the line. (Who was he, and why was he allowed to do it? Mr. Hart was very indignant, and quite right too. As he says, you don't expect to take your nurses out with you when you are riding in a point-to-point.) The biggest jump of the whole day was, unfortunately, attended with fatal results to Mr. Audley Blyth's grey: his horse, landing on a hard mound, broke its leg, and had to be shot, after having cleared a carved-out ditch about 20 feet in width—25 was actually measured from where he took off to where he landed.

In the Farmers' Race, in which both classes (heavy and light) ran together, only eight came to the post, and of these only four passed it on the homeward journey. *Mr. Avila came down three times*, and Major Carter, as he lay on the ground, had a most narrow escape of being jumped on by Mr. Theodore Christy, who, as usual, won the welter on "Chinaman." Mr. Arkwright did the regular thing for the third time of asking on Mr. Milbank's "Sir Frederick," making no less than a total of EIGHT POINT-TO-POINTS to his credit – and when he has not been first he has been second—a good performance. If he goes on at the same rate with luck, by the time he is Mr. Jones's age he may have added yet another 30 to the total—unless he retires in order to give someone else a chance.

"Spitfire," the property of Major H. A. Carter, R.A., is a grey gelding by "Torpedo," by "Gunboat," dam by "Polestar." Bred in Ireland in 1887, he won the Essex Hunt Lightweight Point-to-Point in 1894, the Fox Hunters' Plate, Harlow, United Hunt Plate, Colchester, the same year, and the Essex Hunt Club Cup, Harlow, in 1895; owner up each time. As game a little horse as ever looked through a bridle, he was a pretty warm member with hounds the first time or two the Major rode him, and no one without his owner's determination (you do not meet many of them) would have cared to tackle him.

"Sir Frederick" by "Quits," dam by "Zouave." This half-bred brown gelding, standing 15.2½, by the merest chance

did not join the cab ranks, being purchased by Mr. Milbank, at St. Martin's Lane, in 1892. He came in for some hunting and chasing instead. That the horse was fairly successful as a chaser the following brief record will show:

"Sir Frederick" with owner, Mr. Thomas Milbank, up.

1893.

2nd.	Farmers' Point-to-Point at Stondon.	Ridden by Mr. A. Tweed.
,,	Farmers' Race at Rundells ...	,, Mr. Carroll.
,,	,, ,, Galleywood	,, Mr. Tippler.

1894.

1st.	Farmers' Pt.-to-Pt. Easton...	Ridden by Mr. H. R. B. Tweed.

2nd. Roothing Plate ... ... Ridden by Mr. G. Marsh.
,, Farmers' Race Galleywood... ,, Mr. H. R. B. Tweed.

1895.

1st. Farmers' Pt.-to-Pt. High Roothing. Ridden by Mr. L. Arkwright.
,, Farmers' Pt.-to-Pt. at R. A. Races, North Weald. Ridden by Mr. L. Arkwright.
And the same year, ridden by Capt. Bruce, ran a dead heat with "Evolution" for 3rd place in Roothing Plate at Harlow.

1896.

1st. Farmers' Pt.-to-Pt. Rundells Ridden by Mr. Arkwright.

"Bright Light"

This splendid hunter, a grey gelding by "Gaston Light," was bred in Ireland, where he won many races; he has also won several times in England. He was an extraordinary performer over any country, the best, Mr. Blyth declares, he ever rode. He won the Essex Union Point-to-Point two years in succession, and was leading the heavy weights in the Essex Hunt Point-to-Point at Rundells, in 1896, when he broke his leg.

This chestnut mare (Irish) by "Play Actor"—"Buttercup," by "Haymaker," was purchased by Mr. Blyth at Dublin Horse Show, and steered by him to victory in the Essex Hunt Cup at the Rundells races in 1896, carrying 12st. 7lb., and beating amongst others "Catapult," "Twilight," "Joan," "Eastern Lady," and "Spitfire," all winners. She only stood 15.1, and

Audley Blyth* on "The Actress"

was a very hard puller both hunting and chasing. Mr. Blyth, who is as fond of hunting as any member of the sporting family to which he belongs, has had his flutter in the Shires, and can always fill in a bit of spare time with his gun, for he is a keen shot. His habit of holding his gun in a different way from most men saved him from having his fingers blown off in February, 1897; the gun burst, and his forearm, though very badly hurt, was luckily not permanently injured.

* Mr. Audley Blyth joined the Duke of Cambridge's Own, and sailed in the "Dungevan Castle" on February 17th, 1900.—ED.

Appended is a full list of the runners, the places of the first three only being given:—

THE ESSEX RED-COAT WELTER RACE. Fifteen started.

Mr. H. E. Jones's Colonel	Owner	1
Capt. Ricardo's General Banks	Owner	2
Mr. R. D. Hill's Waterproof	Owner	3
Mr. George Sewell's Duchess	Owner	0
Mr. F. G. Barclay's Conquest	Owner	0
Mr. Howel Price's Rafter	Owner	0
Major Carter's Beefeater	Owner	0
Mr. Pemberton Barnes's Bay Boy	Owner	0
Mr. W. Buckmaster's Speculator	Owner	0
Mr. A. Blyth's Bright Light	Owner	0
Mr. L. R. Carr's Meteor	Owner	0
Mr. G. Gold's Ploughboy	Owner	0
Mr. G. Gilbey's Ruby	Owner	0
Capt. Tufnell's Pig	Owner	0
Mr. C. K. Carr's Buccaneer	Owner	0

THE ESSEX RED-COAT LIGHT-WEIGHT RACE. Thirteen started.

Mr. E. S. Bowlby's Catapult	Mr. Loftus Arkwright	1
Mr. W. Dalton's Cypriot	Owner	2
Mr. Hubert Blyth's Pitlockie	Mr. W. Buckmaster	3
Mr. R. Y. Bevan's Squire	Mr. S. Caldwell	0
Mr. W. Tower's Yokohama	Owner	0
Major Carter's Spitfire	Owner	0
Mr. R. D. Hill's Eastern Lady	Owner	0
Mr. J. Swire's York	Owner	0
Mr. A. Tweed's Tap	Owner	0
Capt. Cairn's Priestess	Owner	0
Mr. T. Tabor's Roscoe	Owner	0
Col. Lockwood's Snap-shot	Mr. Tabor, jun.	0

THE FARMERS' CUP. Eight started. Heavy weights.

Mr. T. Christy's Chinaman	Owner	1
Mr. Avila's Marquis	Owner	0
Mr. J. Newman's Conundrum	Owner	0

Light weights.

Mr. T. Milbank's Sir Frederick	Mr. Loftus Arkwright	1
Mr. S. Young's Widow	Mr. H. Young	2
Mr. T. Christy's Chequebook	Mr. E. Christy	3
Mr. H. Sworder's Crow	Owner	0
Mr. Avila's Cigarette	Major Carter	0

A DAY ON THE GRASS.

Riding on with some kindred spirits to the meet at Epping Long Green, we remarked that we had to go back quite a month to recall a single run with fox hounds that had had the smallest sparkle or vivacity in it—"the luck of fox hunting," for we had evidently been out on the wrong days. But one good day will make amends for many indifferent ones, and we shall always recall with pleasure this day on the grass. *Orange Wood* used to be as full of foxes as the pomum aurantium is of pips, but years of late have found it as bloodless as the boiled fruit itself. No one anticipated a find in the yellow grove, still less that a brace were in hiding when hounds were thrown in at 11.15. One of these broke at the keeper's end, and with the Master's cry, "*Ware wheat!*" ringing in our ears, we galloped the cart track

down hill three abreast to the halloa at the bottom of the wood to find hounds flinging forward with a good scent on the grass by Chambers Farm, and the big drop fence, and on to the Cobbin Brook. Fords are not numerous over this historic stream between the Keeper's house and the Bury road. But the Mate hit off one on the right, and another native of these parts, heeding not the naughty swear words of a kindred spirit who had viewed the fox making tracks by the brookside, plunged through another on the left, followed by Captain Cairns and one or two more, only to have to retrace their steps almost immediately, while the right-hand division, headed by the huntsman, made a wide *détour* to outflank hounds in their supposed flight to the Warren.

Epping Long Green

Sans huntsman and first whip, Easterby did fugleman, and laid the hounds on the line of the fox, who headed in his second point over the Bury road, retraced his steps to Orange Wood, where, being baffled once more at the Nasing side, he awaited Bailey's directions, and it need scarcely be added that he received a notice to go at once. This time he succeeded, crossed the Bury road, and led us over a very pretty country—over the land of that good sportsman and friend of hunting, I mean Mr. Kemsley, who, though a non-hunting man, hasn't a yard of barbed wire on his farm—and brought us along at a fair pace to Marles Farm. Why did the Mate's horse whip round *en route* and block the way?

Horses were smoking-hot when we drew rein at Marles Wood, for the day was muggy and warm to a degree, and the country after the recent heavy rains rode very heavy.

Everyone was on the dart in this little burst, but no one jumped on a hound, and the huntsman was given a very free hand for his cast, as the Master held the key to the situation in the narrow bridle-gate at the corner

of Marles Wood. *Copped Hall keepers in luck.* A brace (foxes not keepers) in Orange Wood, and another in the adjoining covert of Ball Hill, ought to frank them to the keepers' dinner. Headed by the vociferous shouts of the tenant of this farm—"Gill's Farm"—the fox broke away on the opposite side, past the Homestead; and hounds simply flew over the grass to the Keeper's Lodge, and only those who put on the break as hounds streaked down the two long, narrow meadows by the side of the spinney, or who followed immediately those who retraced their steps when the fox doubled back, could claim to have seen any more of this run, for from this point there was no time to dwell a moment, no time to open a gate. As hounds

Donald Gregory on "Kathleen"

raced over the pastures by Hunter's Hall fences came thick and fast. After you, if you please, Miss Buxton, over the blind ditch and rotten tree-stump on the far side; and again by leave, after you, over the fence, out of the stackyard, and a merry race over the next three fields to the *Gregory-cum-Cook* corner, for this is where one of them came to grief, I am told. Certainly the ditch was wide and the landing boggy by that cottage in Hunters Hall Lane. One after the other and the upstanding corner one, Mr. Chapman, if you would miss a couple and have the next after—Jack, Bailey, and Mr. Jones—and find the Heavies, as represented by

Messrs. Howel Price, Barclay, and the Admiral, coming back to you as the pace began to tell on them. Where was the Mate? I saw him ahead of everyone else in the ridge and furrow field by Hunters Hall, but now I scanned the leading dozen in vain. As they leave Nasing Coppice in the same field with hounds, the Admiral can be seen driving his generous black to the front, and, stealing quietly along, note Major Carter and Mr. Jones keeping a bit up their sleeves as running from scent to view (how black and dirty, he looked so bright and glossy seventeen minutes before), hounds fairly ran into their fox in the farm yard at Harolds Park. A brilliant burst that admitted of no shuffling with the fences.

Mr. Gregory takes his day a week, and enjoys it in that thorough way which only those who work hard can fully appreciate. Fox, stag, or hare, whichever comes handiest, suit him equally well, for he loves his gallop as much as he does a good cigar between his teeth, or a good horse between his knees, and that he generally has the latter he in no small measure owes to his professional experience, for he has charge of the veterinary department of one of our largest London Tram Companies, and can spot a good horse directly he sees him.

Galley Hills.—A brace at least on foot, the first, and the best, away with too good a start to warrant anyone jumping the hurdles, with bar on top, *en route* to Deer Park, but leisure enough for the Admiral to remove it, and Mr. Newman Gilbey to demolish all that remained to our general satisfaction. All these years, and you don't know Deer Park yet! Tucking your head in, and driving forward in a silk hat, will never extricate you if you hit it off at the wrong place. The "Open sesame" to this covert is *follow the Mate*. He has done the trick every time this season from whichever side hounds have attacked it. The huntsman may prove a will-o'-the-wisp, as I shall show by-and-by. Right or wrong mattered not, the fox had gone, and if you ask what became of him, I can only add, *don't know*, but can give you a lot of, perhaps, unnecessary information about the Nasing Coppice customer we found at 4 p.m.

With ranks diminished we reached the muddy corner of this snug covert, and awaited with the keenest anxiety the result of the last draw for the day. At least two horsemen were very keen, if their one-shay comrades were shaky, and there could be little room for doubt to which contingent they belonged, when, at the first whimper of hounds in covert, the rush took place at the muddy exit, which admitted of only one at a time going through. 'Faith, the *double-barrel men*, if you like XX, got vastly the best of it. None, however, dreamt that absolutely the first pull, if you'll just except that chuck of the curb rein near Harolds Park, that they would get at their horses would be the bridge over the Cobbins brook at Warlies, and there wasn't time to remove the hanging bush from "Sheila's" tail.* To Deer Park hounds simply raced, the Mate going for his old corner with a few others, while those who followed Bailey into the covert, including Mr. C. E. Green and Major Wilson, had to tread in and out of stubs for some time before they could strike the comparatively clear space, where even then the overhanging boughs switched them in the face as they galloped forward after the huntsman, who, like a *will-o'-the-wisp*, had disappeared (you cannot compete with a huntsman in threading a covert).

* Mr. W. Sewell's chesnut mare.

As hounds crossed the road below Deer Park he was with them, so was the Mate, Mr. Barclay, Mr. Peel and his daughter, as without going into Shatter Bushes hounds flew past it and over a wide ditch at the bottom, and in a straight line over the next fence rode the leaders, Mr. Peel and Miss Peel, Mr. Crossman (who was riding a lovely little black horse, one of his father's breeding, with "Gladiateur's" blood in his veins), and Mr. Ford Barclay. Those who went for the gate found it locked, Bailey, didn't they? but caught hounds at the brook and the bridge, and a very compact and select little band it was, who, led by Mr. Buxton, clattered over its wooden rafters. *Warlies Park* as usual carried a capital scent, and hounds flung forward at a pace sufficient to show that the Master's grey was tiring, for as we rose the hill he began to fall back.

Just a hover in the road beyond the park, just a glimpse at the newly plastered razor-bank well bushed on the top, just a gleam of a bold black-and-tan dog with waving stern plunging into the briary depths of the bank a yard or two beyond, just a sight of "Sheila's" tail, and her rider landing well over the bushed-up gate, *the only weak place in the fence*, into the next field; and then we galloped up the road for Mr. Peel's corner, the worst of the lot, high, narrow, with drop beyond well covered with strong tree-roots and briary growth. The bank, without its blind ditch, wanted doing, and if it was the worst fence that we had met with in the run, not a man or lady who arrived at that point sheered away from it. Still better, as far as one could make out, no one fell at it, and fifteen minutes from the time we had found at Nasing Coppice we concluded that the gallop was over, as on a former occasion, when the fox gained sanctuary at this very spot.

Bailey lost his fox here; he says so himself. Thinking he had gone to ground, he neglected to make one of his bold forward casts, and lost a valuable five minutes, only, perhaps, to give us a better hunt, as hounds worked forward for another twenty-five minutes. Passing by Mr. C. Webster's farm, another of our good-hearted hunting friends, warm-hearted and generous to a degree—everyone has a good word for *Charlie Webster*. Why certain gentlemen, including the hard-riding parson, got into a kitchen garden need not be told; but that he and our popular secretary came out poorer by 2s. apiece is now a matter of history. Up the steep hill through Riddens Grove, piloted by Mr. C. E. Green, and cheered by glad note of hound, we climbed to its rim, and, jumping over the rabbit-burrowed bank, found that hounds were turning away again from the forest to embark on the small enclosures behind Copped Hall Green, sink the hill for Spratts Hedgerow, and cross *en route* two roads, each of which was a delusion and snare, O Mate, to entice you away from hounds and the leads of Mr. Harry Sworder's bold jumping black, as the Cobbins Brook, again spanned by handy bridge, came to view.

Quite as fast as we could ride to them hounds drove forward up hill by Mr. Nicholls' plantation, and on to Shatter Bushes, the rails in the corner the only place for those who went with them. The huntsman and Mr. Sworder flew them together, Mrs. Sewell and Mr. Green followed without raising a splinter, but Mrs. Sewell's horse was getting blown, and two fences further on *sat down like a dog* in a blind ditch to recover his wind, the first and only time, she tells me, that she has ever got to the bottom of "Jack." Hounds had now worked close up to their fox, for he was seen to crawl into Deer Park dead-beat. Running through it, one hound gave tongue over the Galley Hill green lane, and we almost decided to draw lots to see who should go forward, for all horses were getting done. The Huntsman, however, borrowed Jack's horse and got forward, for out of

his own he *couldn't get a kick*. In Galley Hills the Master viewed the beaten fox, but hounds could make nothing of it, much I fear, to Mr. Peel's chagrin, for I think he would dearly have liked his daughter to have had the brush, which she had so well earned. Certainly she is one of the best riders to hounds I have ever seen, and in her skill in crossing a country reminds me very much of Miss Bagot's prowess when she hunted with us. But good rider as Miss Peel undoubtedly is, she will pardon my saying that her father is better, and I quite believe what is told of him, that at one time he was the *hardest man in Ireland*, for at the present moment —bar Mr. Sheffield Neave—he is the hardest man in Essex, and if you would know his age you must turn to Debrett, for from his appearance you would never guess it.

Very few *went to the bitter end, though several of us came to the end of the bitter* which Mr. Christie so kindly proffered us as we rode homewards past his house—Mr. Sworder having to go at a very sober pace on a lame horse, which, having carried him brilliantly all day, had the misfortune to run a thorn into his knee. I would mention one lady who never left hounds, and always had a good place when they ran—Miss Colvin, the sister of the Squire of Monkhams, whose Galley Hill coverts always harbour a fox. Mr. P. S. Lee and Mr. Cook were among the very select few who managed to see it out on one horse apiece.

It is with the keenest regret, and deepest sympathy with those that he has left behind, that I have to record the almost tragic death, in its appalling suddenness, of a man well known in the hunting field with the Essex Hounds, Mr. William Nicholson, who, although he had only recently taken up his residence at Theydon Grove, had lived and hunted in Essex all his life. Out hunting on Saturday last, and again the following Monday, no word or hint of any pain or ailment escaped his lips as he rode homewards with three or four of us that Monday evening (his last ride), and, to all appearance in perfect health, bid us farewell. The next night he was a corpse. A man of a shy and retiring disposition, he courted no spurious popularity, but he earned everyone's respect—for he was a bold and fearless rider of undaunted courage, a man of his word. In the short time in which he had lived in Epping, people saw enough of him to realise that they have lost a good friend. A liberal supporter of all local institutions, one of his last acts was to send a subscription to a fund being raised for a working man stricken down by disease.

"But, hush! through the woodland the night-wind is stealing;
The whisper of death passes over the plain;
The moon in her glory is softly revealing
The fields HE may never ride over again." PHILLPOTTS WILLIAMS.

A snapshot at William Dalton on "The Clown" jumping a hurdle.

CHAPTER III.

William Dalton—James Christy—"Narcissus"—"Comet"—G. H. Lee—"Rosabelle"—Bob Ward—Mr. Parry—Loftus Arkwright—Sam Block—P. Saunders—"Needle Gun"—Washington Single—"May Morn"—Once Too Often—"Stella"—The Bycullah Meeting—William Symonds—J. Wilson, V.S.—"Volunteer"—G. Bell Gripper—"Romeo"—Seymour Caldwell—"Elevator"—A Big Jump—"Paddy"—Alfred Kemp—"Killarney"—"Harlequin"—Blackmore—Edward T. Mashiter, M.F.H.—"Rylstone"—Mr. and Mrs. Howel J. Price—Mrs. Neill—Cub Hunting in 1896—Matching Green—Kirby Gate—A Young Man's Country—Col. and Mrs. F. J. Fane—"Royal Chieftain"—"Ruby"—A Gallop over the Grass from Latton Park—Mr. Stacey to the Front—Mrs. Carter's Escape—Check but not Checkmate—Getting to the bottom of three horses—Mr. Bosley takes the Fox from the Hounds—Ridley's Gorse—Mr. Swire Escapes a Watery Grave—Miss M. Green and her horse "Comet"—The Advice of the Veteran—Sportsmen All.

MR. JAMES CHRISTY, whose portrait is here given, on one of his favourite hunters, "Narcissus," a chestnut mare (of which more anon) bred by himself is well known to all followers of hounds in Essex, whether fox or stag, but particularly the latter.

Born at Boyton Hall Farm, in 1845, which his father had held under Lord Petre since 1836, he early imbibed a love of the chase, for although his father was a very keen agriculturist, and has, we believe, the credit of being the first to introduce steam ploughing into Essex, he was at the same time a keen sportsman, very fond of a day's hunting or shooting. It will not surprise anyone, therefore, to know that the staghounds met regularly three times a season at Boyton Hall during the masterships of Mr. Frederick Petre and the late Mr. Henry Petre, nor that the subject of our memoir at a very early age became a keen stag-hunter;

in fact, he may be said to have been born one. At 18 years of age—to be more precise, in 1863—Mr. James Christy began to hunt regularly with the staghounds and was of considerable assistance to the late Mr. Henry Petre, not only in the field but in keeping his deer for him at Writtle, where as a tenant of Lord Petre's he had lived since 1868. A keen and bold rider to hounds, there are few better judges of a horse in the county, and numerous are the prizes (over sixty

James Christy on "Narcissus"

besides "high commendations") he has won in the show ring. "Narcissus" and "Comet," whose portraits are here given, fairly typify the class of animal Mr. Christy goes in for. "Narcissus," a chestnut mare by "Ringleader," dam "Daffodil" by "Mainstone," was bred by Mr. Christy. Possessing immense power in her back and loins, with good legs and feet (as all Ringleaders had) she was a very fine

fencer and very fast, though a little hot and impetuous. She was sold as a five-year old to Mr. Hames, of Leicester, who, when he saw her, remarked that although he had no room for eighteen horses which he had just purchased in Ireland, he would build another stable rather than lose one like her. She was afterwards sold for a high price and went into the North of England.

"Narcissus."

1888, 1st prize as best foal with her dam at the Essex Show at Ilford.

"Comet"

1888, 1st prize at Sir T. B. Lennard's Show at Belhus.

1890, 1st prize for best two-year old hunter, Sir T. B. Lennard's Show, Belhus.

1892, 2nd prize for best four-year old class, Essex Show at Harlow.

1892, 2nd prize in hunting-mare class with foal at foot, at the Royal Counties Show, Tunbridge Wells.

1892, 2nd prize in hunting-mare class, Suffolk Show.

1893, 1st prize as 13 stone hunter, Essex Show at Romford.

1893, 2nd prize as 14 stone hunter, Essex Show at Romford.

1893, 2nd prize as 14 stone hunter, Norfolk Show.
1893, 2nd prize as 14 stone hunter, Suffolk Show.

"Comet," a bay gelding, 16 hands, by "Brilliant," dam by "Chit Chat," was purchased in Ireland as a four-year old, and hunted by Mr. Christy for three seasons, when he was bought by Mr. E. Ball, and carried him brilliantly for two seasons, coming to an untimely end by eating yew when

G. Herbert Lee on "Rosabelle"

out for a summer's run. Up to 15 stone with a lot of quality, he was clever as a cat and could gallop. Just before Mr. Ball bought him he was sold to Captain Gordon Cunard for 300 guineas, but he was spun by his vet. as having a slight bursular enlargement of the knee which never affected him.

"COMET,"

At the Suffolk Agricultural Show at Lowestoft, 1st prize for best 14 stone hunter.

Also champion prize for best hunter in the show.

1890, at the Essex Show held at Chelmsford, 1st prize in 14 stone hunter class; 1st prize in 13 stone hunter class.

Also champion for best hunter in the show.

Mr. Lee's experiences date back from the year 1867-68 at a time when Wilson was just giving up the horn to Dobson and Dick Christian, who, in his capacity as first whip, was almost as keen and good a rider as his celebrated namesake. Then Bob Ward's voice was making the Hertfordshire woodlands ring with its musical notes, and Mr. Parry, said to possess the ugliest hunter and best hounds in England, was holding sway over the Puckeridge country.

Mr. Lee was present—in fact, riding just behind—when the late Mr. Arkwright, walking over the ditch leading out of the covert now belonging to Mr. Gerald Buxton, near Theydon Green, met with the unfortunate accident from which he never recovered.

Mr. Lee recollects how, from 1868 to 1872, Mr. Sam Block used to cut out the work, especially over timber, being ably seconded by Mr. Ede, a thorough gentleman and gentleman rider; while the memory of many a long hack home with his eldest brother Arthur B. Lee, the celebrated Anthony Trollope and Mr. Borwick, who had not then become so enamoured of salmon fishing—*facilis est descensus*—comes back to him as we discuss old times. That I cannot reproduce a portrait of Mr. Lee's well known mare "Polly," is a matter for regret, for she has a history worth recording. Bought, in 1885, from Mr. Bristow, the well-known dealer, of Basingstoke, and an "honest one" at that, she was nearly thoroughbred, a quick and clever fencer that did not know how to refuse: and though a delicate feeder, she hunted, if occasion required, as often as four times in eight days. At the end of March, 1886, in a sharp fifteen minutes from Parndon Woods to Marles, when Lord Charles Beresford and "Billy White" (who jumped the hand gate out of Parndon Woods) were going very strong, Mr. Lee had the misfortune to land on the stump of a tree as he jumped out of a small paddock near Epping Long Green, and overreached his mare so badly that a week later tetanus (then very prevalent) set in, and for five weeks the mare hung in slings, being fed on malt wort, raw eggs and milk. Though the spasms relaxed for a time every thirty-six hours, she was constantly given up by the veterinary, Mr. W. F. Tegg; once the knacker was sent for; but being a sensible man he was taking a holiday like other good folks on Easter Monday, and

luckily, as the sequel showed, was unable to come. The mare lived to carry Mr. Lee two more seasons, but developing chronic laminitis, owing to having been kept so long in slings, she had to be destroyed. Though a charming hack, she had no liking for harness, and on one occasion tried to jump the park palings at Warlies, with the trap behind her.

Needle Gun (Property of P. Saunders)

Mr. James Christy, Mr. H. E. Jones and Mr. E. Tufnell, and a host of others, will tell you that this grand thoroughbred, a brown gelding, by "Gunboat," standing 15.3, was the best and fastest horse that ever went well with stag hounds in Essex: and undoubtedly he was in the palmy days when Mr. Phil Barker, Mr. James Christy and Mr. P. Saunders were a triumvirate, hard to beat or match. In speaking of his performances, his owner, Mr. Saunders, is modest, and makes light of the Dunmow railway gates incident, remarking that they were low; jumping on to the line over the rail by the side

of the first gate, "Needle Gun" broke it, and hitting the other gate with his knees, he blundered so badly that his owner had to part company. Mr. Saunders goes on to remark that "in my day we used not to jump timber in Essex, and any one that came out and jumped a few of the very low gates found in the Roothings was put down as a wonder. The best thing about the horse was his capacity for going through the dirt,* and in my day there was a lot of steam plough; after a field or two of this he could always put himself at the head of affairs." Mr. Saunders further adds that in his opinion "the staghounds of fifteen (?) years ago went a great deal faster than they do now—forty-five to sixty minutes, no stopping them, and about thirty minutes of it best pace was what they called a 'clinker;' and if the days were short few of the horses wanted any more after forty-five minutes." Before "Needle Gun" had ever seen a fence, let alone been over one, Mr. P. C. Barker, who eventually sold the horse to Mr. Saunders, gave £100 for him, and got eleven falls the first day he rode him, the horse showing temper and running through his fences.

Mr. Washington Single is here represented on "May Morn," one of his three best known hunters with the Essex Hounds, the others being "Once too Often" and "Stella," of whom more anon.

"May Morn" won the second jumping prize at the Essex Agricultural Show, when it was last held at Waltham Abbey, being ridden on that occasion by Mr. P. Tippler. She was a nervous mare with the lightest of mouths, and, in fact, was just the kind of animal on which many a man would have been turned out of the ring at starting. A delightful mount in a quick thing, she never made the least fuss or fault at a big fence, and was away on landing in a style peculiarly her own that was truly fascinating to witness; for one possessing so much quality, she galloped high, consequently was by no means a fast mare, but she could jump on the shortest notice and go the shortest way.

"Once too Often," another of Mr. Single's favourites, was bought at Messrs. Tattersall's out of a stud of the Hon. Hugh Lowther's, now Lord Lonsdale, by a well-known man on the borders of the Essex country and returned on the ground that he was suffering from mud fever and in too weak a condition to be capable of being hunted. There was no doubt at the time that the objection would have held good,

* He had the best of shoulders.

and at the subsequent auction he became Mr. Single's property; this was in February, 1874. He soon began to recover from the malady, which entirely disappeared with his summer's rest. Washing his legs was avoided, and thus the disease never reappeared. He was a thoroughbred chestnut, with beautiful shoulders and the prettiest of blood-like heads; being somewhat long and leggy, he was more of a race-horse in appearance than a cross-country conveyance. He was a charming hack, once carrying Mr. Single from Blackmore

Washington Single on "May Morn"

High Woods to Tottenham after a hard day's hunting. He was the first *past the post* for the first Roothing cup ever run at Rundells; this was at a time when every horse running under G.N.H. rules had to have a certificate lodged at Messrs. Weatherby's in order to show that they had been regularly hunted; this he had been for more than the necessary time with the Essex Hounds, but the certificate not having been sent in, he was perforce disqualified; it was, of course, duly lodged the following week; he fell at the fence in the dip of the hill, but Mr. Single did not part company. His next

appearance was at a meeting held at Bycullah Park, Enfield, which lasted two days. The Steeplechase course is now entirely built over; at that time the Bycullah meeting was quite a little Croydon, and it was here that "Once too Often" probably ran his best race. Nine faced the starter. "Lucy," a mare with a long list of winning brackets to her name, was made favourite; her jockey caught hold of the back of the saddle at every fence; just as Mr. Single was getting on terms

William Symonds

with her (she was leading); "Once too Often" failed to pull himself together, and coming down heavily at the last fence, turned a complete somersault, and where he fell he remained for some minutes, but was only blown and got up uninjured. The winning jockey was by no means the inexperienced man

his seat would have indicated, for he afterwards won the National on "Austerlitz," riding in precisely the same manner.

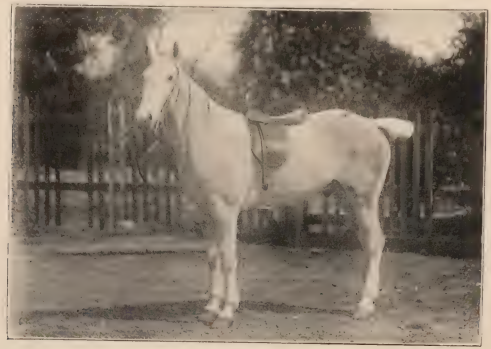
We now come to "Stella," the third of Mr. Single's that possessed a turn of speed. She was a bay by "Cavendish," with bad shoulders, hard wearing legs, slack loins, and had a nappy temper. She won the Roothing Cup and Towcester Town Plate in 1883, in the same week after running second in a race at Sandown Park, which unenviable place she occupied on three other occasions.

William Symonds, from his earliest days, has been associated with the Sport of Kings. Born at Woodford in 1832, he went regularly with Mr. Vigne during school holidays in the early forties. 1848 saw him in Leicestershire enjoying many a day with the Quorn under Sir R. Sutton, and two years later following stag once a fortnight in Norfolk, and filling up spare time with the West Norfolk Harriers, afterwards with the Essex and Suffolk, Carrington Nunn's East Essex, and R. Marriott's, with an occasional day with the Queen and Mr. Garth's in Berkshire. In 1856 Mr. Symonds settled at Lambourne, and knew all the Masters of the Essex Hunt to date. Twenty years later he removed to North Weald, where he earned the gratitude and goodwill of all who followed the fortune of hounds in that part of Essex, by the liberal way he supported hunting whether fox, stag or hare. Mr. Symonds has prepared the courses and acted as clerk at all the Rundells meetings; he has also set out and been flag pointsman at eleven point-to-point chases in different parts of the Essex Hunt country. We only wish we could add that fortune had smiled more kindly on one who, embarking a large capital in farming operations at a time when things looked rosy for the agriculturist, had to sit down under a long lease and high rent and face it out.

We wish we could add the portrait of Mr. J. Wilson, V.S., of Enfield, the owner of the good grey on p. 78, for they were inseparable and undefeated in the Essex hunting field, until the gallant animal broke his back. Could do anything but talk, says his owner, although he alarmed a gentleman to whom he once lent him, to such an extent as to bring down on Mr. Wilson's devoted head a severe lecture from the father of the Centaur, who charged Mr. Wilson with putting his son upon a horse likely to kill him. Ever afterwards the late Mr. Andrew Caldecott, mindful of this lecture would say, "Well! you are on that diabolical horse again."

Mr. Wilson was, however, somewhat accustomed to being

blown up in the hunting field; he says that the colour of his horse was always against him, and found him out at once if too near the hounds; but he further remarks that being blown up by Sir Henry was a good deal better than being spoken to pleasantly by some folks. Mr. Wilson recalls, as one of the best bursts with fox-hounds he ever saw (when he had the good luck to be mounted on a clinker—Mr. Block's "Benicia Boy"), was from Weald Coppice to Brick Kilns pulling the varmint down just short of the covert. That run took place in the time of the grandsire of the present master,



"Volunteer"

whom Mr. Wilson looked upon as the most finished horseman he ever knew, taking into consideration the qualities, hands, seat, judgment, and pluck that make for a perfect rider; he goes on to say that the sight of his grandson the present master, Mr. Loftus Arkwright, coming over the fences in the Point-to-Point races of 1896, reminded him very much of his grandfather's style of riding.

Romeo: this grey gelding, by "Lamlash," carried Mr. George Bell Gripper, who is here represented with him, for three seasons with the Essex fox and Col. Somerset's stag hounds. The horse was an undeniable fencer, with a great partiality for timber: on one occasion, when in the present Lord Rookwood's possession, he jumped a high gate in Havering Park as his huntsman was jogging up to open it.

Bred by the Hon. Ralph Nevill, Master of the West Kent fox hounds, from whom Lord Rookwood purchased him, he received a good schooling in hunt stables, for upon Lord Rookwood, then Sir Henry Selwin Ibbetson, giving up the Essex Hounds, he was purchased by a Master of Harriers in Scotland, and in his hands won a race, a thing he had not succeeded in doing in England, although tried at Harlow, Ipswich, and Chelmsford with Bailey and Sir Claud de

George Bell Gripper on "Romeo"

Crespigny up. Mr. Gripper states that he was out and out the best hunter he ever rode, and that he died, as all such horses should die, in the field.

When sending me a portrait of a favourite hunter, "Paddy," which carried him three seasons, Mr. Seymour Caldwell mentions one of the most extraordinary days he ever had with the Essex Fox hounds. It seems that when Mr. Green was Master (the date December 9, '92, the meet at Radwinter), there had been a week's frost at least, but a slight thaw setting

in, and there being just a slight chance of hunting, Mr. Green went to Dunmow with hounds. The roads were coated with ice and snow, and the country, although rideable, was also covered with snow. Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. A. J. Edwards, Mr. Caldwell and the Master, were the only people who trained to Dunmow, and of these neither Mr. Bevan or Mr. Edwards could get to the meet on account of the state of the roads. Mr. Green and Mr. Caldwell managed it somehow. Needless to add, no one else was there. Drawing Bendish, a rare old fox went away at once, and in a blinding snowstorm gave them a splitter to Finchingfield. The best horse, however, which Mr. Caldwell ever possessed was an Irishman named "Elevator,"

Seymour Caldwell

bought from Mr. Hames, of Leicester. He was a rare bold jumper, and Mr. Caldwell won the Fox Hunters' Plate with him from a large field ; sold afterwards to Captain Williams, R.H.A. Whilst being trained by Adams, of Epsom, he did a record jump over the open ditch, measured, Mr. Caldwell thinks, at 32 feet. It was on this horse that Mr. Caldwell jumped a very wide brook between Curtis Mill Green and Colonel Lockwood's. I know that the horse I was riding, "Black Fox," formerly the property of Mr. Mosley Leigh, a pretty bold fencer as a rule, wouldn't face it, but plumped in. Fortunately there was little water, but a good gravelly bottom, and lots of room for walking about.

Mr. Caldwell is as good between the flags as he is across country, and has scored a good many wins in Essex, carrying off the Fox Hunters' Plate in three successive years first upon Lady Brooke's "Cheltenham," the next year on his own horse "Elevator," and then H. Bagot's "Ace of Spades." In the race of the following year, when riding Mrs. Crossman's "Ruth" he was beaten by only a head. In '98 and '99 Mr. Caldwell won the Lightweight Point to Point (there were eighteen starters in '98) on Mrs. Crossman's "Ruth." Also in '99 the Essex Hunt Club Cup on the same good animal, and credited himself with the Stock Exchange Point to Point on Mr. Bank's "Frisky Jane" in '98. In a previous year he had won the Rochdale Harrier Point-to-Point on Mr. G. Kemp's "Greta."

"Paddy"

Mr. Kemp is another of those whose name frequently occurs in these pages. Until he met with an accident which stopped him riding across country, he always held a very prominent part in the good runs that fell to the share of fox or stag hounds. A fine horseman, he was successful in many races, and steered his own mare "Killarney" to victory in the East Essex and Essex Point-to-Point races, held at Thaxted in 1888, when twenty-two started; and in 1889 he piloted "Harle-

quin" to victory for the light weight and Welter Hunt Cup at Rundells. Mr. Kemp was a regular polo player with the West Essex Polo Club for many years. A good judge of horse or pony, he generally managed to pick up some bargains, though they were not always the easiest animals in the world to ride. Golf now occupies Mr. Kemp's spare moments, and since his election in 1898 (the year before this portrait of him on "Dolly" was taken by Miss G. Waters) as Captain of the Royal Epping Forest Golf Club at Chingford, with its 500 members, he has found plenty to occupy him in that line.

Alfred Kemp

BLACKMORE! At last you have retrieved your name,
For once again your sacred groves do ring
With huntsman's cheer and melody of hounds,
And hearts that once were sad are now aflame
With joy; and loudly shall your praises sing
That blank no more, of *Woodlands you are King.*

Satisfactory very it is to have to record that at least on the last three occasions when hounds have paid a visit to these noted woodlands they have found, not one, but several wiry foxes. Monday, March 23rd, was

no exception, and that on a day when a fitter occupation might have been gathering primroses or searching for violets. For come the dog days you'll have it no hotter or steamier, and the straw hat worn by one young lady would have been quite *de rigueur* had not the forecast showery, perhaps thunder, followed so closely on the warning flashes of summer lightning that only the eve before had brilliantly illuminated a moonlit sky.

Hoarse till lunchtime, after halloaing that fox over one of the main rides, my dear Major! and down on my luck when hounds could not speak to his trail. By-the-bye, and while it occurs to us, we missed you in the subsequent run into Brentwood. Were you there, or was the garden too full for you?

What were the feelings of the majority shortly afterwards when we found hounds had slipped us, and gone goodness knows where, wouldn't,

Near Blackmore High Woods

we fear, look well on paper. But there was always consolation to be gathered, and honey to be sipped in the bare thought of how frightfully hot they must have found it who had gone pounding after hounds. A bare half-dozen were with them in that brief journey across the open to Mill Green—a lady* on a beautiful thoroughbred black, Mr. C. E. Ridley (you can't leave Mr. Ridley in Blackmore), Major Wilson and Capt. Tufnell (he must pardon me if I am wrong, but he looks too young for a major). Another lady in a light covert coat, which ere long changed its hue from a muddy fall, went to the point, where, headed and baulked, the fox beat a retreat back to the Woodlands. That, or another, which was it that hounds ran hotly and fiercely for twenty minutes in the woods, and lost as suddenly?

* Mrs. Waters.

Good luck to both; for we came away a united field to Thoby Wood, and every one got another chance of a dip in the lucky bag, as, to Mr. Ridley's halloa I believe, a good fox went away in the direction of Fryerning. Two fields and we were down at a brook, the leaders pulling up and scanning it, and an irresistible cry ringing out, "To the left for the bridge." The length of a grass meadow you had it, and the gate swung easily to Mr. Hull's hunting crop, to be caught as it swung by Mr. Lee on the chestnut. Two Mr. Lees out; which was it that fell?

And where were the hounds? Running the brook banks, and parallel on the far side rode the bridge contingent. Wrong as usual; for two fields they rode and rode to find that hounds were leaving them as they turned sharp back. In or over or back by the bridge, which was it to be? Mr. Fitch on the grey went in and out. Mr. Bevan hit off a footbridge, which his horse cleverly jumped. But most of us had something to be thankful for that hounds dwelt sufficiently long in Fitz-Walters to give us a chance of catching them. But there was fun to be had on the journey thither, even if you missed the treat of seeing Mr. Morris' timber-jumping grey vaulting iron railings. (Iron railings! methought these were Roly's copyright.) How beautifully Mrs. Howel Price's little bay landed into the road over hedge, ditch, and drop, I cannot forget. She had ample time to take a pull at her reins, as the big dogs ran the covert to its extreme limits, to cross the brook at a spot where two days previously you would have looked in vain for a ford.

A heavy piece of sown land, and the Master keeping well up the furrows was an example to be followed; and shortly afterwards a bold rapid cast of the huntsman's up to the verge of Park Wood—a stroke to be admired—as following up his clue he struck the line of his fox into Canterbury Springs, where Tally Ho back, and we thought they had nailed him. Easterby cap up on the grass beyond, hounds came away with a will, and with a ravishing scent drove forward after their fox—Col. Fane, Capt. Tufnell, Mr. Howel Price, and Miss Tippler, riding her brother's well-known skewbald (didn't this horse once belong to Mr. Longbourne?), getting away on excellent terms on the right of the covert, the Master and huntsman and the majority keeping to the left. Over a rough but sporting country men, and ladies too, sat down to ride; and, riding as she always does when hounds run hard, could be seen Miss Morgan in the front rank; while the black thoroughbred was carrying her owner to the finish she meant to see. In and out of roads and lanes, if many fell, no one turned away from a fence, or ceased riding a second before they had cleared the High Woods and reached Weald Park. Through that wood comes to my brain e'en now the fleeting vision of the leaders who were steering their course on the left over the crumbling bank—Mr. Waltham, Mr. Sworder, Mr. Bevan, and Jack, and leaving it as they jumped in, Mr. Ridley's flashing pink, on the right the Master's grey—and the huntsman I'll swear, too—and up at the park palings, as soon as any, Mr. Price and Mr. Crossman. By Mr. Arrow's house hounds hung a few seconds, and, then turning back, ran hard over the grass vale to Brentwood. Up to and through its very allotments they pushed their fox, and not a yard of wire to catch you on the grass (the land of a sportsman, I am sure).

Out of his country our fox knew not where to go, and, turning back near the line, came back into the town and sought in vain to escape in the garden of a man who is second to none in his love of a good gallop across a country. The last 220 yards Bailey did on foot, but was so blown when hounds ran into their fox that until he had had a reviver from Mr. Lawrence's flask he was unable to handle him. Then on the lawn ensued a scene which the owner of "the Cat" would have given his Sunday breeches

The Meet at Blackmore, March 23rd, 1896

E. Helme "The Doctor" H. Sworder McAdam Major Wilson
C. E. Ridley THE MASTER Bailey Captain Ricardo Henry Lawrence
R. Waltham George Hart

to have witnessed, for a good fox was broken up, and mask and brush were eagerly claimed. Great was the thirst of those who had ridden through this fifty minutes' burst from Thoby Woods, but, great as it was, the soda held out, and it was your own fault if you took your whisky neat. Mrs. Darby and Dr. Baker were most kind and attentive to every one. No one saw more of this run, nor saw it better, than the late secretary* of the Essex Union. It was a pleasure to have him with us again, and a treat to see him riding in his old form, with an eye on the leading hound—not he my informant, but our own Secretary, that the Union dogs had travelled a leetle too fast on the previous Saturday for some of our men who went to seek fresh fields and pastures new. Was the ground heavy? No, sir; it was a quagmire. With stag on same day the mud flew up like snow as horses galloped; the deep going finding the bottom of most horses, and in the case of the Master, two.

Edward T. Mashiter on his mare "Rylstone"

"Rylstone" bought at Mr. Ashton's (late M.F.H. Essex Union) sale at Tatts' in '96, is a rare stamp of a weight carrier for

* Mr. E. T. Helme (Mashiter).

the heavy ploughs of the Essex Union country, but 'tis of her owner I would write. No man is better known in the annals of the chase in the Essex Union or our country, for Mr. Helme has always been a devotee of the sport, and held the arduous post of Secretary to the Essex Union Hounds from 1877 to 1891, during the Masterships of Mr. W. M. White and Captain Carnegy, and part of the period when Commander Kemble held the reins. The resignation of Mr. Mashiter, or Mr. Helme, the name by which he was most familiar to us all, was received with profound regret, his numerous friends presenting him with a lovely silver candelabra in testimony of the esteem in which they held him. Since that date, however, on the resignation of Colonel Hornby of the Mastership of the Essex Union Hounds at the end of the season '97-98, Mr. Mashiter was unanimously chosen as Master, and how wise was the choice was amply demonstrated in the grand season's sport which the E.H. had in '98-99. Mr. Mashiter's first year of office. It is an open secret that the interesting chapter devoted to a brief survey of the Essex Union Hounds in Messrs. Ball and Gilbey's book, "The Essex Foxhounds," was contributed by Mr. Mashiter, who is as facile with his pen as he was ever quick in getting to Hounds and sticking to them when they meant business in a real ding-dong run.

In bringing to a conclusion my hunting notes for 1895-96, I have little further to add to that which has been already stated. I would mention, however, that, at the particular request of Col. Archer Houblon, our hounds made a special journey into the Takeley Forest country on Wednesday, March 25th, for the sole purpose of reducing the number of foxes that abound in that part of the country. It could not have been termed a brilliant scenting-day, nevertheless Bailey cleverly brought two dog-foxes to hand, and very nearly accounted for one of another leash found in Hyde Hall Springs. There should be room for some good and early cub-hunting in that neighbourhood next season, and a show of foxes that it will pay to bustle.

Friday at Ashdon calls for no particular mention except (we hardly expect to hear of another bye day) that it saw the finish of what may be fairly said to have been a remarkable season; it will probably stand out clear and distinct from all others as the most open on record. That it has been more prolific of good runs than any other cannot so confidently be asserted; but sport throughout has been of a good average character, and on occasions, particularly in the Friday-country, some runs of extraordinary brilliancy have taken place. It is very satisfactory to know that the season has passed away without any serious accident in the field to any member of the Hunt, for, with the exception of one collar bone, we have heard of no splints being required.

In taking leave of this season we may be permitted to look ahead to the next, and to prophecy that the outlook is a happy one. No change of mastership takes place, and with two of the largest landowners in this

county or the neighbouring one of Hertfordshire at the head of affairs, we have a guarantee that the interests of the Hunt are in the right hands. Mr. Bowlby and Mr. Arkwright are in close touch with their own class, without whose goodwill and co-operation hunting could not exist for a week; and are as closely linked by sympathy and experience with all who have to contend against the gloomy times through which the agricultural community is passing.

That brighter times may dawn for our best friends the farmers, and that an early cub-hunting season will follow on the heels of a good harvest, are thoughts which will find a ready echo in the hearts of Essex sportsmen.

Howel J. Price

Howel J. Price can hold his own with the heavy or light-weights either across the Roothings or over the banks of the Monday country, and is always ready to ride any horse in the Point-to-Point races. He steered his own horse to victory in the Welter Point-to-Point, which was run in the Theydon Mount country in 1899, and ran a dead heat with the same horse in the Bar Point-to-Point races of the same year. A good shot, a keen supporter during its most flourishing decade of the West Essex Polo Club, and an enthusiastic golfer, he has

the fortunate knack of making friends of all with whom he is brought in contact.

Mrs. Howel J. Price is very fortunate in possessing a very clever little hunter in the one upon which she is photographed, for he carries her very safely and well over the trappiest part of the Monday country in which that charming residence, Greensted Hall, where she and her husband give such a hearty welcome to the members of the Essex Hunt, is so conveniently situated.

Mrs. Howel J. Price

The Essex Hounds opened the cubbing season of 1896-97 under very favourable auspices at Beech Hill Park on Monday, September 7th.

Meeting at six o'clock they found a strong litter of cubs and had a very busy morning, running one to ground in the Forest, and giving three others a good bustling without killing. Only a few of the old followers of the

Hunt were out, including Mr. Edwards, Messrs. F. and C. E. Green, Mr. Avila, and Mr. H. J. Miller (the latter on foot).

Wednesday, the 9th, found them at Harlow Common at six o'clock, a strong litter of cubs in Latton Park, and Bailey going home an hour or two later with his tail down at having failed to kill one on Bush Fair morning, for, if there is one day in the year upon which he would sooner kill a cub than any other, it's on the anniversary of this ancient fair. Not many out, but they included the Master and Mrs. Arkwright, Mr. Seymour Caldwell, Mr. and Mrs. Crocker, Mrs. Neill, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. W. Sewell, Mr. Bevan, Mr. and Miss Steele, Mr. Swire, Messrs. Avila, Basham, Bestall, and Furze, and Master H. Chisenhale Marsh.

Mrs. Neill on "Dainty"

This beautiful brown mare, by "Dutch Sam" by "Flying Dutchman," bred by Rev. Cecil Legard, of Cottesbrook, was bought by Mrs. Neill in Northamptonshire in 1894. Whether with the Pytchley, Duke of Beaufort's, or Essex Hounds, she has invariably proved herself a perfect fencer. A great stayer,

she particularly distinguished herself in one of the best days of a good season (March 13th, '96), when hounds ran from near Thaxted, close to Ashdon, almost into Cambridgeshire, in thirty-seven minutes; and in the afternoon of the same day from Canfield Hart through Hallingbury to Thorley in Herts, in fifty minutes, carrying her owner right to the front in both runs. She afterwards hacked home as fresh as paint.

One labours under a disadvantage writing notes on hunting some hundred miles from the scene of operations, with only the music of the sad sea wave instead of the melodious cry of hounds ringing in your ears; but facts are facts, whether they reach one through the medium of the post or by the more rapid communication of the electric wires. Lord Rookwood, we believe, was not at home when the first visit this season was paid to the Down Hall coverts on Saturday last, and the day marked by killing a brace of Moor Hall cubs after some very pretty hound work.

The six o'clock meet at Abridge on Monday, the 14th, was well attended, particularly by the rising generation, one of Mr. F. Green's sons obtaining the mask, which was secured by Bailey out of a very strong litter of cubs found in Col. Lockwood's coverts.

To the names of those already mentioned as having been duly presented this season at Bailey's drawing-rooms we may add the gallant Colonel's. We only recognise one Colonel with the Essex now, and he *sine dubio*—we haven't quite forgotten all our Latin—the most popular man in the county, Mr. Howel J. Price (has he forsaken the golf links?), Mr. H. Sworder and his two boys, Miss Waters, Miss Dorothy Sewell, and Mr. Saward, of Patch Park. The ground should be getting soft enough for taking leps. We wonder whether any leps have been taken.

"The Best Cub-Hunting Season we have had for Ten or Eleven Years," we expected to hear from the lips of all those who had been seizing Time by the forelock, conditioning themselves and their hunters, and enjoying the sweets of October sports. But, alas! no such dictum, no such cheery news has been forthcoming, for in spite of the wet autumn, the ground reeking with moisture, and a capital show of cubs in most parts of the country, very few runs worth recording have taken place. We have only heard of three, and of these none have been in the home, or grass, country. How is this? is naturally asked, if not so readily answered. We would hazard the opinion in all modesty, without consulting any experts, that it is a question of coverts not being thrown open until they have been shot through, and that number increases yearly, and with that the difficulty of finding suitable ground for drilling young hounds naturally follows.

That Bailey has been so successful with this season's entry (14½ couples) is a matter of no small congratulation. Certainly no hounds have ever appeared in better condition or more fit to go than the eighteen couple of dog hounds over which we were privileged to cast our eye on the opening day of the season 1896-97, at the usual trysting-place of Matching, where from east, west, north and south, the country side had sent its quota in spite of a steady downpour of rain and a keen, cutting wind from the east.

No account of a Matching Green meet would be complete without some attempt to index those present, or satisfactory without apology to the many whose familiar figures escape the speaker's eye. First and foremost the Masters, Mr. E. S. Bowlby and Mr. Loftus Arkwright—the former just back from Scotland, where he has had such a successful season among the stags, grassing on one occasion a fine 14-pointer—Mrs. Bowlby, Mrs. Arkwright,

Matching Green, 1896

Easterby S. Fitch Bailey Mrs. Bennett J. Miller G. H. Lee F. Miller "Jack" Mrs. R. Cunliffe F. Avila Smith Loftus W. Arkwright R. D. Hill N. Gilbey

Lord Rookwood, looking, as Mr. George Hart remarked to me, ten years younger, and another old master of the Essex who carries his years lightly, and rides with the nerve of five-and-twenty; Mr. C. E. Green and his fidus Achates, Mr. R. Y. Bevan. The list so far official, the remainder alphabetically.

"For here all are equal—no class legislation,
No privilege hinders; no family pride;
In the 'image of war' show the pluck of the nation;
Ride, ancient patrician! democracy, ride."

And before the sun set, ride they could, and did, in the sharp brief scurry that redeemed the day, from Matching Park to ground anent Belgium Springs. Mr. Avila, Mr. Frank Ball, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. F. Ball, Mr. E. A. Ball, Mr. A. S. Bowlby and Miss Bowlby, Mr. W. H. Baddeley and son, Mr. Ford Barclay, Mr. W. H. Pemberton-Barnes, Mr. Basham, Mr. Barrow, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Buckmaster, Miss G. and Miss M. Blyth, Mr. H. A. Blyth and Master Rupert Blyth, Capt. and Mrs. Bruce, Miss M. Buxton, Mrs. G. Buxton, Major and Mrs. Carter, Mr. E. E. Cockett, Mr. W. Cook, Mr. and Mrs. Weston Crocker, Rev. L. Capel-Cure, Mr. and Miss Capel-Cure, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Messrs. Carr (2), Mr. Seymour Caldwell, Mr. Cooper, Mr. G. H. Dawson, Mr. N. Dawson, Mr. Docwra, Mrs. Howard Fowler, Mr. Foster, Messrs. Furze (2), Mr. S. Fitch, Miss E. Gilbey, Mr. Guy Gilbey, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. George Hart and son, Mr. T. Harrison, Mr. J. Harris, Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Hill, Mr. Horner, jun., Mr. T. R. Hull, Mr. Howard, Mr. G. Harris, V.S., Mr. H. E. Jones, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. Henry Lawrence, V.S., Dr. Love, Mr. F. E. Loyd, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Mr. Lowndes, Mr. H Lines, Mr. E. Lobb, Miss E. Morgan, Miss M. Morgan, Mr. Morris, Mr. Henry Miller and two sons, Mrs. Neill, Mr. L. Pelly, Miss Pelly, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Price, Mr. Patchett, Q.C., Mr. E. Quare, M.H., Miss Quare, Captain Ricardo, Mrs. Hine, Mr. Cecil Savill, Mr. Washington Single, Mr. D. Cunliffe Smith, Mrs. R. Cunliffe Smith, Mr. A. R. Steele and son, Mr. J. Swire, Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. Scruby, jun., Mr. Usborne, M.P., and the Misses and Mr. Usborne, Mr. Waters, Mr. T. White, Rev. M. Wilson, Major Wilson, General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C.

A late arrival at the meet precludes any attempt at completing a list of the carriage folk, but there were certainly not so many as usual. Had the weather held, the meet of '97 would have marked a record in the attendance of cyclists—and for that reason some of us were cynical enough to welcome the downpour; two hunting men were nearly killed last season in our country by bicyclists, who, in a crowd of horsemen going from covert to covert are, they must permit me to say, very much out of place both in regard to their own and their friends' safety. A slight shy, the machine is over, a foot through the front wheel, horse ruined, machine smashed, rider killed.

To Man Wood at once, and the shine off your boots and the gloss off your hats, my brave seigneurs, ere the covert was reached. The two grey habits * looked neater than ever in the dull atmosphere, and mud proof apparently, but the black attires showed every splash. A fox in Man Wood, for we all viewed him, and we all voted that he was big enough to give the run of the season, but no one (not even the man in the cart who saw him come out three times) would grant that he had headed him, and blooded the hounds so close to covert.

"If you cannot find anywhere else come to Down Hall," said my lord,

* Mrs. Hine's and Miss Gilbey's.

and what more regal offer from a keen pheasant shooter, with a house full of guests and not a shot yet fired in the coverts, would you have had? And to Down Hall we went, not before, however, Mr. Porter Mathews' face had clouded o'er with disappointment at his cubs not at home, and Brick-kilns and Row-wood of ancient renown had failed at the test.

"Here they come!" we remarked to a man as the cocks' forward could be heard in the first covert disturbed. May they rocket higher than ever, my lord, when your shoot comes off. But hark! a moment. The big dog hounds are giving tongue, a fox is afoot, and with a roar they settle to the scent, and race through the policies and through the avenue covert to mysteriously battle hounds. Did he go treewards? If not, ask George Dawson to solve the mystery, and note that he lives for another day; and, further, that Down Hall has added another flower to the sweet garland of sport that clings round its illustrious portals.

To Matching Park rode the thrusters about 2.30 p.m., and home rode a large contingent from the Chelmsford side, and yet they filled up one ride and lined another in the famous covert of Matching Park ere the dark red rover, that was viewed thrice across its rides, fled the covert to leave half of us in the lurch; for, pinning our faith to the fagot stack of last year, we found our mistake as hounds swung away to the right and the survey of the country began to be made in sections of twos and threes. Every fence had someone riding up it, and terrifying you long before you got there. Mr. C. E. Green was nearly down into the first road, and the Major's* grey had no room to spare as he went straight out of it. Mr. Cecil Savill was very handy at a gate, but who the man in pink, afoot in a long narrow meadow fringed, if not by a brook, by a ditch, that bore close resemblance to one who asked us to send his horse back, was, we have not the slightest idea, for

"The pace was too good to inquire,"

but we dubbed him a philosopher, for he was taking it easy, and voted him a straight rider, to have arrived at that stage of the run dismounted, and his horse out of sight.

On a fat horse, and with a bad start, you couldn't make much leeway, but you could enjoy the fun, and know that the embers were not quite raked out, if you arrived at Belgium Springs in time to see the two pinks† hop over the gate, and Mr. Wederell vainly endeavouring to open it afterwards for some of us to squeeze through in single file. Beyond Belgium Springs, in a deep leafy ditch, hounds marked their fox to ground, and we heard how young Mr. Tyndale White had shovelled his Galloway to the fore, and how well Mrs. Arkwright, Mrs. Crossman, Miss Gilbey, Mrs. Hine, and Mrs. Walter Buckmaster had held their own in this sparkling gallop.

Wednesday, November 4th.—Blackmore, and a bright, merry morning in the woods on Monday's horse, and to note a few faces not seen at Monday's meet. The popular secretary of the Hunt Club, Mr. Tyndale White, looking uncommonly smart, and just back from his triumphs at Kirby Gate, where with the Quorn last Monday he was lucky enough to drop in for one of the best runs they have had for years at their opening meet. The crowd were quickly choked off by an early brook. "Never saw one so full in my life," said Mr. White. "Four men on each side of me as I took my cut at it. But it's *only a young man's country*," he wound up by saying, "however much you may like it. *There are too many collar bones in the fences.*"—Mrs. McIntosh, Mrs. Waters, Col., Mrs. and Miss Fane, Mr. Gerald Buxton piloting his sister, Mr. Helme (looking as keen as ever),

* Major Wilson.

† Mr. Walter Buckmaster was one of them.

Mr. D. Christy on his prize chestnut, Mr. Brindle exercising one of Mr. Sheffield Neave's big blood ones, young Mr. Marriage, Mr. Raby, Miss Tippler, Mr. Tilling, Mr. Hepburn. "My Monday's horse may have blessed you, Easterby, if I didn't, when you rolled head over heels in front of me on the road—the second time, you tell me, that the chestnut has served you that trick (it looked a good deal more than a bruised knee at the time) —for at that moment hounds struck the open in the Mill Green direction, and for all I kenned as I rode steadily homewards after seeing you up, might have been having the run of the season. It struck me that the field who meant business would have some leeway to make up, for the majority of them started two fields to the bad, with hounds out of sight.

Colonel F. J. Fane on "Royal Chieftain"

Colonel Frederick J. Fane on "Royal Chieftain," an Irish hunter by "Sprig of Shillelagh," a good stamp indeed (look how he's ribbed!) for the Essex country, particularly the Monday side, with its high banks and blind ditches, where the Colonel is such a shining light, not only in the art of riding to hounds over the cramped fences that there abound, but in always having a fox in his coverts in the Kelvedon country for himself and his friends to ride after, for which we cannot be

too grateful. At times, indeed, we should have been very badly off for the raw material had it not been for the Colonel and his father, that grand old sportsman, the Rev. F. Fane, whose portrait will be found on page 83, vol. i.

"Ruby," an Irish cob with plenty of Irish fun in her, by "Bonny Charley," carries her owner splendidly with hounds. Mrs. Fane, like her husband, is fond of the chase, and possesses a charm of manner in the hunting field which, if few can emulate, all can admire.

Mrs. F. J. Fane on "Ruby"

Nettleswell X. Capital letters! if you please, Sir; this year as last. For have we not had another great day from this fixture? A day which, if not so good as last year when we ran from Latton Park, and killed at Matching Hall, will still be remembered as something far above the average, and on which it will always be a pleasure to look back upon, and no effort to recall.

As usual on a Wednesday, there was a very representative field out, well mounted and well attired. We are always glad to see a man on a young one who doesn't mean business come out in mufti; it saves a host

of inquiries of "Where is he?" or "Why wasn't he there?" but it is a game I have never cared about myself to come out on a raw youngster with a coat like a doormat, and miss probably the run of the season. However, each man to his own taste; we are not all built the same way. Certainly if I wanted to school a beginner it would not be on Wednesday with the Essex Fox Hounds, my friend,* but with Tuesday's harriers or Saturday's beagles. How many good runs you have lost, and will you lose, this way? The following occur to me at time of writing as having participated in Wednesday's sport. Doubtless I have missed many, and of the many I crave pardon for remissness:

Our Master and Mrs. Bowlby, Mrs. Arkwright, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. Avila, Mrs. F. Ball, Mr. E. A. Ball, Mr. Basham, Mrs. Bennett, Mr. A. S. Bowlby, Misses Bowlby (2), Miss Blyth, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Buckmaster, Capt. and Mrs. Bruce, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Buxton, Miss T. Buxton, Major and Mrs. Carter, Mr. Christie, Mr. E. A. Cockett, Mr. and Mrs. Weston Crocker, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Mr. F. Dent, Messrs. Furze (2), Mr. S. Fitch, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Fowler, Messrs. Tresham and Guy Gilbey, Mr. Archie Gold, Mr. Green, of Parndon, Mr. Gregory, Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Hill, Mr. Horner, jun., Mr. T. K. Hull, Mr. George Hart and two sons, Mr. J. Harris, Mr. G. Harris, Mr. Howard, Mr. Jones, Dr. Love, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. F. E. Loyd, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Mr. W. M. Marter, Mrs. Neill, Mr. Archibald Peel and Misses Peel (2), Miss Pelly, Mr. Phelips, Mr. Radford, Capt. Ricardo, Mrs. Redwood, Rev. R. L. Scott, Mr. A. R. Steele and son, Mr. Swire, Mr. R. S. Tilling, Mr. Todhunter, Major Wilson, Mrs. Waters.

Just as hounds moved off a horse reared up and came over backwards with his rider in the middle of the road, about as nasty a fall as one can meet with. Luckily no bones appear to have been broken, and we had a doctor with us (Dr. Love, of Hoddesdon), who later on in the day was risking his own and other people's necks by jumping gates.

No sign of a fox before we reached Harlow Park, and then we had four on foot at once—and four good ones—a brace going Latton-wards, and one for the open country beyond Hastingwood Common, and the other, whose fate was sealed, making tracks over Harlow Common for Barnsley's. Without entering the covert, he crossed the Harlow road and ran very fast towards Gravel-pit Wood. Leaving that and Bay's Grove on the right, hounds rattled along over the grass pastures towards Latton, and taking a turn over the lane, ran into their fox on the edge of Harlow Bush Common. Mr. R. D. Hill on "Eastern Lady" must have had a rare squeak for it as he flew the rabbit-burrowed bank just before the kill. There was little fencing in this gallop unless you happened to be on the right of hounds, where Mr. Stacey, of Puckeridge renown, on a wonderful grey, was doing the piloting, for on the left the road from the Clock Tower lay convenient. All the same, it was a nice merry little hunt, creditable alike to huntsman and hounds, and bringing us conveniently to the luncheon hour, prepared us for the afternoon's treat.

A Gallop over the Grass from Latton Park.—The moment hounds were in covert they opened, and after a false start in the direction of Harlow Park, their fox set his mask boldly for Parndon Woods. At that instant a second horseman was jogging steadily homewards towards Epping, and was passing Rundell's. Without drawing rein he arrived at the bottom of the lower Forest as the fox, looking tired then, crossed the road three fields in

* H. E. Jones, who, of late years, was always very fond of riding young ones, and consequently was often out of it.

front of hounds. This will give some idea of the pace we went after leaving Latton Park for Parndon Woods, towards which point—galloping down a headland—the young horse* with a coat like a doormat appeared to be going well, but after Parndon Woods we never saw him again.

Across Rye Hill Common, through the farm, and so to Parndon Woods, is the usual line. No one knows it better than Bailey, yet he swung open the gate and took the country to be near his hounds, who at any moment might have borne to the left, and the grass line to Marles. Running straight through the top end of the middle wood, hounds woke up the silent glades of the furthest covert, as full cry they went through it, pointing for Nasing Common.

"That man at the corner will head him," muttered the huntsman, as he jumped off his horse to swing open the small hand-gate—Capt. White's, we call it, for on one occasion, he and Lord Charles Beresford jumped it, as hounds came away at this point—and down the boggy middle ride, the clay up to your hocks, we plunged and galloped to meet another band of horsemen, led by Mr. C. E. Green, who had come straight through the woods, to take our turn over the single rail out of the boggy corner, for few followed Mr. Basham's bold lead to the right of our place, as the "Gone away" came floating down wind. Taking the line up to Epping Long Green, Bailey made a grand cast. Giving a good fox credit for a bold line and a good country, he held them over the lane, and then the fun began, as hounds, picking it up, ran a cracker straight for Marles, over a delightful grass country, and fences that you could gallop at. The pace quite good enough for the Doctor's "Gate," after fording the brooklet, and six, if not seven, accepted his lead: Mrs. Crossman, on her lovely black—few better horses in the hunt; Major Wilson on his grey; Mr. Stacey, in velvet cap, on his grey; Mr. Swire on his bay, and threepenny-bits would not have jolted out between their knees and saddle flaps, for they all sat as tight as wax as they came over, without the rap of a hoof.

Into Marles for a certainty, and you would have made a mistake, while left-handed of that covert you could never have retrieved it ere the game was played out and the Forest won. Down the slope of the grass at hot pace, a single place in one fence, and no jealousy in Mrs. Walter Buckmaster's good riding, or she would never have let, no, made me, go first; and in and out of the lane we rode for Cobbins Brook, and Mr. Walter Buckmaster hadn't quite forgotten the playing grounds of his boyhood and the ford under the old oak tree. The horse he was riding was a clinker, though the martingale bespoke careful handling, and to follow in his tracks might mean a rude awakening from careless indifference, for a fence that he could trifle with would extend the ordinary hunter to his fullest capacity; so we measured our distance at the next blind hole over which he so lightly popped, and so towards the Forest, looming dark and purple in the distance, and to note the hard-riding secretary† of the Puckeridge Hunt, on his good chestnut, going as if he had never known what dislocated shoulders meant, and always with the thrusters in the van, from the bird's-eye view permitted us, and the velvet cap already alluded to striding along to the front on his grey, reminding one very much, with his mutton-chop whiskers, of Lord Lonsdale in his keenness and style of riding, and alongside in close attendance with no jealousy, easily, confidently, airily holding their own, rode the fairest of the fair, the bravest of the brave, but narrow was the escape of the gallant "Spitfire's" rider‡ as she hung balanced on the bank—and deep was the gratitude Jack earned for his timely aid.

* Mr. H. E. Jones's chestnut. † Mr. Tresham Gilbey. ‡ Mrs. Carter.

A falter on the plough, a check but no checkmate, a reuniting of the pieces on the board—wire enquiries from our pink-clad secretary, satisfactory answers, and so after Mr. Avila and Mr. Guy Gilbey over the razor-banked fences to the Forest to surmise not amiss that the hard-riding tenant of Theydon Hall Farm was bestriding a clinker which in the Gaynes Park stables had made her mark. Did you vote? Did you wish? Did you fear the run over as you cantered through the Forest rides and turned up the Ongar Road for Rough Talleys? Did you cross the line at once, or take a return ticket with Bailey down the meadow Ongar-wards? Did you hope a good fox would live for another day as they bustled him over the line in Rough Talleys and threw up in the plough beyond near the butts, and had you a stern chase to Weald Coppice to find Bailey there with his hounds, and a beaten fox just in front of them vouched for by Mr. Bosley, of Weald Coppice fame? Five minutes ahead of hounds when he was viewed near Canes, Mr. George Hart, hat in air, the clue; the grass towards Duck Lane the line, and after you, Mr. Hart, an ex-master's formula and key to success—as hounds swung over the wide ditch for Weald Coppice again.

You could hardly have got into that grass field on the right of Weald Coppice, Capt. Bruce, without your chance and the rails, and you joined us over a roller of briar-growth, ditch guarded, without hesitation, as down the stubble for the lower Forest the hounds drove ahead to turn right-handed across a well-fenced farm, and admit of our hardest welter* trying his fourth horse over a razor bank as Mr. G. Harris, hat in hand, pointed the line to Weald Coppice for the last time, and Easterby caught the death-note quicker than anyone as he leapt off his horse and made for the centre of the wood, Mr. Bosley taking the fox from the hounds. One hour and thirty minutes had this fox stood up, and the last forty-five had been hound work every minute of it, from the time Rough Talleys was left. Let me make my peace with the bicyclists, for a prettier picture than that which greeted me as I rode meetwards on the memorable Wednesday, November 11th, I have no wish to gaze on: up the gentle incline he trundled the pair of wheels, while she deftly arranged the neat straw which, in the act of dismounting, had tilted half an inch.

Of Saturday's fog and rain, and a Pleshey and splashy meet, I have little to tell you. A Saturday throng, a bumper gathering, Mr. Ridley out to see his new gorse, the future *covert of the hunt*, drawn for the first time—a great absence of scent—a great if not greater desideratum than the animal itself if you want to have sport, as true to-day as in the years gone by when Cecil penned his records of the chase.

Mr. Pemberton-Barnes, you will be delighted to hear, we found a rare litter in Bower Wood, on Monday, November 16th, a litter which, although never routed in the cub-hunting season, showed a knowledge of the country which could only have been acquired in many a midnight foray; and, further, a proper regard for their own safety and the feelings of the Hunt to prevent their keeping any of us waiting, for a brace went off at once, and a pretty start it was, and to see it and the Essex Hounds at work for the first time this season came Mr. F. Green and Miss M. Green, and Miss M. Glyn and Miss Jones. Right through the Bower Wood and by Bower House was the line selected to the well laurelled paths that surround Havering-atte-Bower, whose hospitable owner we sadly learnt was too unwell to be with us, but who nevertheless would not allow the day to

* Mr. C. E. Green got to the bottom of his own horses and finished up on a kennel horse.

pass without her servants dispensing cakes and ales as of yore from the terraced lawn. In vain did Bailey dismount to assist his hounds as they ran their fox in the shrubberies; in vain did they drive him out and hunt him back through the Bower Wood, for he managed without any difficulty to shake off his pursuers

By Bedfords and Pyrgo Park to seek for another, Mr. Hussey on our tracks with ready kodak. Mr. F. Green tells me that he is about the best amateur photographer he knows, and that the views he has taken of the Romford Golf Links for Messrs. Vertue and Co.'s coming publication, "British Golf Links," edited by Horace Hutchinson, are simple superb. Mr. F. Green is a capital raconteur, and the time passed pleasantly enough in his company while the hounds were run through Pyrgo Wood before trying Mrs. McIntosh's gorse. Not finding, we sauntered leisurely to the scenes of the great pheasant shoot of last week, the talk of the country-side —1,500 head in two days—and plenty of them left too, for they went rocketing over our heads as the hounds were thrown into Broom Wood, and no old cocks minus their tail feathers to prove that the colonel's friends had not held straight. Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. H. J. Price, and Mr. Loftus W. Arkwright were three of the colonel's neighbours who shared in the sport, and after all this a capital show of foxes in the big wood, a pheasant-fed customer fairly laughing at hounds as he stretched himself out for a circle in the sunlight and a dash in the forest. 'Faith, it was a quick thing at starting, and no one caught the Major on his chestnut as he took his own line when the covert was left, and that without plunging down the boggy ride after the huntsman and his following. Hounds had lots of room, but they wanted their huntsman, Mr. Barclay tells me, when they threw up at their first check after the circle back by Broom Wood.

"And where, oh, where, was he?
With coat tails pinn'd by his horse's hoof,
And muddy, as muddy, could be."

'Twas but a little bank that brought him down, but there he remained till rescued by Mr. Green. Nor heeded he the warning cry of "'Ware rabbit holes," as he put his roan at a bank from which half-a-dozen of us had turned away, to get over safely, while we were blocked, of course, by a man on a light chestnut coming down. But nearly every fence was horse-embracing, and devoutly thankful not to have stubbed a good animal in this mazy dance, we reached the Forest and left it again at the bottom end on good terms, but with scent as catchy as the lane was narrow, out of which your *quandam* chestnut, Mr. Tilling, was not allowed to refuse, but with the huntsman had to rejoin the road contingent who lost hounds behind Knowles Hill. To Loughton Shaws ere the sun had set, in the hope of a gallop over the grass, finished a day which, if marked by no good run, it would have been hard to have beaten for sauntering and picnicking in foggy November.

There was no great rush to follow the huntsman into the deep rides of Galley Hill Woods on Wednesday, the 18th, when we met at Nasing Common, though a few hardy spirits plunged with him through the miry glades to see hounds drag up and unkennel their fox, drive him in one short circle through the upper woods, and kill him all too soon as he made a flying leap into a pond close to the covert. After this, away with Bailey for a mile gallop to see him lay his hounds on at Obelisk Wood, with another Galley Hill fox gone with five minutes' law. A line to the Copped Hall march was marked, not before hounds had divided and Mr. Swire had been rescued from all but a watery grave, his horse having rolled back with

him into a tributary of the Cobbin brook, five men, led by Mr. Marter, being told off for the rescue.

A daughter of Mr. Frederick Green, of Hainault Lodge, Miss M. Green now hunts more than her father, inheriting all his keenness and enthusiasm for the chase. No day is too long for her, no fence too big. Free from all jealousy in riding, never in the way, never asking for girths to be tightened nor gates to be opened, she is one of a class of hunting ladies whom hunting men welcome in their midst, and whom they are proud to follow.

Miss Margaret Green on "Comet"

At hot pace for Deer Park, across the lane and the big grass fields into Galley Hills, and to make it good on the Monkhams side before slipping back, and away with catchy scent to Copped Hall again, and a shooting veto against further exploration of its preserves.

"To Nasing Coppice and a certain find," said the Master, and for the prettiest bit of hunting in the day. I like these evening hunts. What did a well-known correspondent of the *Field* say last week? May I quote his

words, although the first few sentences are more applicable to a Leicestershire field than an Essex gathering, for I must give credit to Essex sportsmen for sticking to it as long as their horses have got any go in them.

"It always puzzles me why sportsmen with plenty of horseflesh under them do not stop out to see the end—*finis coronat opus!* There may be a good deal of honest pleasure and hearty enjoyment in the beginning or the middle of a day, but for real satisfaction commend me to the finish. If you have to stumble out on an old broken-winded gee that has to do his turn three days afterwards, I can understand going home; but with a fresh young horse that has not to hunt again, perhaps, for a week, come on, my young friends, and see the finish, you will have your boots off in time for the soup at eight o'clock. I can tell you from past experience, of which I have had a fair amount, that it will not be those brilliant five-and-twenty minutes, however oft repeated, which will linger in your memories as you sit years after by the solitary fire and smoke your solitary pipe at the decaying ashes, but the long, good runs, when you persevered on, even though yourself and horse were somewhat tired, when you saw the fox killed in the gloaming, and came home with the hounds with a pad in your pocket to be set up to remind you long afterwards of the good old days. *Forsitan hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*"

We set off in the rain by Hunter's Hall, and from the bottom end came the Whip's scream of "a-w-a-y," and over the common to round the covert we sped down hill, Mr. Peel on his martingaled roan making great play, to fight our way up again by Harold's Park, as the pack turned up hill and threw up beyond the avenue.

To the Coppice again with Bailey and the hounds, once more to hear the "Gone away" from the lower end and the twang of the horn, and to catch sight of hounds (if you dallied not in the muddy lane, Brother Ned) as we swung back the heavy gate, driving through the mist over the common towards Parndon Woods, the fastest bit of the day, no fences and up wind, we had to ride to see it turning, with the Master, Mr. Steele, Mr. Green, Mr. Fowler, Mr. Caldwell, and others into the fields before crossing the road for Parndon Woods. A good fox, for they held the line straight through, and the steam from the horses hung in the boughs of the trees as we plunged through the dripping rides, to reach Latton and hear the last wail of the horn, before turning homewards in the warm rain that still came down in ceaseless patter on the decaying leaves, with Mr. Tilling, Mr. Fitch, and the parson on the old grey horse—sportsmen all; for they had seen it out on one horse apiece, and the smile on their faces was good to look upon—as good as the music of the big dogs as they smeused through the straggling fences below Fern Hill.

Suttons

CHAPTER IV.

Suttons—Sir Charles Cunliffe Smith—Anxious Moments—Two Broken Backs—And the Bay still Leads the Van—What Mr. Vickerman thought of the Nasing Country—Mrs. McIntosh's "Maquet"—Mrs. Gerald Buxton on "Phroso"—The Meet of Mr. Quare's Harriers at Thornwood Common, December 5th, 1896—Canes—Mr. Jerrard comes to Grief—"Pinafore"—Bobbingworth Windmill—A Good Day in spite of the Colonel—"King Ebor"—Save a Jump—Thomas Cowee on "The Rebel"—Running for Barbers—Blood will tell—The Belvoir Gordon—Seeking a Clue—Ongar Park—L. T. Carr—Our Young Nimrods—Knightsland Wood—The Bob-tailed Fox gets away—Lost in the Fog—Miss Ethel M. Jones—Snatched from the Frost—Tattle Bushes—Nether Hall—Rye House—The Boy on the Long-tailed Bay—H. W. Horner—Rupert—The Admiral, Charles Bury—Vicarage Wood—Over the iron railings—Barnsleys to Little Laver—Ain't he a varmint!

SIR Charles's name is frequently mentioned in Mr. Vickerman's diary. He no longer rides across country, leaving that to his son, whose portrait will be found on another page. Owning, as he does, a large tract of land with several important coverts, in the heart of the Monday country, he exercises a great deal of influence over the sport enjoyed in that district; he has also been from time to time as occasion arose, a very liberal subscriber to the Hunt funds.

Wind N.E., meet Fyfield; given a sound horse in your stable, not to be missed for a dukedom.

Not past the Truant Schools, for the Osiers we rode on Wednesday, nor yet through the picturesque village, but along the Beauchamp Roding road to Mr. Caton's mustard for an outlyer, and he was there. A fierce scramble at the black gate out of the road, a man fishing for a stirrup iron pulled out in the crush. Hounds hovering for a moment up the hedgerow, and then the field, swooping down like eagles on their prey, was the fleeting

vision vouchsafed us as hounds set to work to run up wind at a pace which robbed the blindest ditch of its terrors, and gave a zest to the variety of fences which had to be tackled, and brought out the capacity of every horse that was ridden.

What roads or lanes we crossed I know not, but 'twas fairly early in the run, Mr. Tweed, when you pushed open the gate for Bailey, and the next field when you lay on your back, after coming over your horse's head when he pitched heavily as he landed over the high switch fence. To pull up to make sure you were all right was the work of a second—to take one's bearings (as the River Roding lay almost fronting us) a delay that paid. That neat, grey-coated figure,[1] pressing his heels into his good black by the old elm tree as he urged him into the ford, must be a native; must, too, have caught that faint halloa beyond the stream, or old Mr. Horner, Mr. Tyndale White, and his son on the good little grey, would hardly have followed him so quickly.

It was provoking certainly, but bound to come ere we reached the road. Nigh to Berner's Wood the fox had had about enough at the pace up wind, and in the ploughed field in which Mr. Seymour Caldwell viewed him turned back. Hounds went over the road without flinging themselves in that wide circle which is such a pretty feature of hare hunting, and the line was not recovered until Bailey, river delayed, came up and made it good, to Berner's Wood, but only the afterglow remained, for whether in covert or down wind in the open—note it down!—with wind N.E. there was hardly a trace of scent. It is a mistake to get into a lane. It is a mistake to ride cunning on a road has hitherto been my experience in the Roothing country, for you invariably find hounds turning away from you, and when you set off across country on your own account, and get landed in one of the deep ditches, who is to let your friends know you are missing? Fortunately, last Wednesday we rode the road in squadron. We had an officer with us, a K.D.G.; he took the country early on his charger, and was all right, and we hardened our hearts to follow the pink on the chestnut who lives not 100 miles from Epping, when in went one of the horses[2] into a desperately blind ditch. Some anxious moments were passed by the onlookers ere the rider, who was tightly held by her habit, was released; safety or not, it clung to the pommel. Fortunately for her, the poor animal's legs were wedged, so she escaped.

Rejoining hounds as they were thrown into Nor Wood, we heard that they had held a line into Screens, and found in Witney Wood without being able to run. In Brick Kilns and Man Wood foxes were plentiful, but scent no better.

For change of scene we went to Lankester Springs and got away on such good terms that a right merry burst ensued to Hatfield Grange almost into Mr. Weston Crocker's larder, which Mr. Roly Bevan, having ridden his own line on the left of the brook, was the first to reach. Taking it over the Hatfield-road we had a very pretty hunt over a nerve-trying country to Hatfield Heath, six ladies (two from Epping) seeing it out, and never shirking a fence.

One could see little but the points of one's horse's ears as riding home one went stumbling over the newly metalled roads, but we chuckled with satisfaction at the masterly way Crawley had handled that hay truss shot

[1] Mr. Seymour Caldwell.

[2] Mrs. L. Pelly's; its back was broken and it had to be shot. A horse belonging to Mr. Edwards, which came out of the same stable in the morning, met with a similar fate.

out of the loft at the inn on the Heath, and recalled with satisfaction the glow of the fire on the cheerful faces of half-a-dozen out of the twenty-two who had stayed for the end and the hospitable entertainment that followed.

"And the bay still leads the van,
They may follow as they can,
And the d—l take the hindmost is the cry."

We shall have few colder days this season, when 'tis possible to hunt, than last Saturday, November 28th, 1896. The Kennels the meet—and no time lost getting to work, hounds having a start of the field such as a master of hounds must dearly love, when they came away from Moor Hall and we raced for the gate at the top of the park to catch them—no one fancying the cut direct, the iron palings, although we have heard of horses, and know them too, Mr. Morris, that fancy that style of obstruction.

Sir Charles Cunliffe Smith

Believe me, it was a chance thrown away. Any thruster—and there were just a few on the thrust—who had chosen to get clear of the mad rush, and quietly selected his own line, and the iron fencing, might have had a lead of the lot, and caught hounds quicker than anyone, always supposing it came off all right, and he hadn't broken his own or his horse's neck. Don't forget it next time. However, there it was, and it was the gate we went for, and the gate some missed, as they were carried beyond it in the

wild stampede. If you got through with the first half-dozen you might have noted that no one could catch the huntsman and Mr. Seymour Caldwell, who was riding a clinker (Mr. Guy Gilbey's bay), before Heathen Wood was reached. You might further have observed that hounds turned back at Heathen Wood for Moor Hall, first crossing the brook, and going for Sheering Street. It was a case of the last being first, for the front rank rode for the bridge and the road, and away from hounds, while the rear guard had the choice of a ford over the brook, a cut at the brook, or a coast down the brook, according to age, discretion, or valour. Valour * (can we say discretion ?) had a cut at it in more than one instance : but it was the last day in the world to be riding about in boots full of water, even though whisky inside them, and a dose for the rider, was available on the spot.

Safely back in Moor Hall we recovered hounds, and lost the fox. No, not even up a tree could they find him.

Brevity being the soul of wit, the best description † of the gallop, overheard during the day, may be accepted as follows: "I galloped there a mile behind (there, being Heathen Wood), and I galloped back a mile behind (back, being Moor Hall)." And on one of the two journeys most, if not all, of us, who have any regard for veracity would have to confess to its accuracy. But it warmed us all the same, and we expected a great run from Harlow Park, and we got it not ; neither at Latton, nor Parndon, for scent there was none. So foxes and those who like riding in Bailey's pocket every cast he makes had it all their own way. Yes, all their own way ; yet, before the shades of night had fallen, they were giving him lots of room in the run that, commencing at Mr. Todhunter's spinney, went on for two hours before it was wound up below Monkhams at the bottom of Galley Hills ; and how he came to have such a free hand, tire all the horses out, and succeeded in satisfying the most ardent pursuers, is here briefly and truthfully set down.

As already remarked, it was with the fox—a good one, too (you won't walk so leisurely out of Parndon Woods, my bucks, the next time it is drawn)—from Mr. Todhunter's spinney that he did the trick. It was the first six or seven fences that straggled the field out, and brought at least one man ‡—not a light one—to mother earth, as we raced for Broadley Common. We don't often meet there now, but just fifty-one years ago a great run came off over the country we were so shortly to cross (of which more anon) from this particular fixture; and it was the gallop across Nasing Common that took the buck and kick out of most of the nags ere they had cleared the Coppice and raced to Deer Park.

What a boon to hunting men a well drained track across this quagmire, if freed from ant hills, would be. That all escaped them without a spill was astonishing, for we crossed them diagonally. In the great run already alluded to they brought to grief the only man, the second whip, who got away with hounds from Parndon Woods, and there were only three out of a big field (think of that as compared with to-day!) who succeeded in crossing them fast enough to get away with hounds as, leaving the coppice behind, they ran at a great pace to Copped Hall, and making a sweep, came back by Epping Church to Parndon Woods in the hour. The writer§ of the run, who was well in it, and had had some experiences in Leicestershire, remarks that the country they crossed after leaving the

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* Mr. Nevill Dawson got in.
† Mr. Gerald Buxton's version.
‡ Mr. Howard Fowler on his bay.
§ Mr. C. R. Vickerman.

coppice reminded him very much of that fox-hunter's elysium, and what a treat it was to get a variety of fencing, and to feel his good horse bounding over the stiff fences and crashing through the bullfinches. None of that on Saturday: but if we did not change at Deer Park we certainly ran very much slower. Leaving Galley Hills and Monkhams behind, hounds pointed straight for Waltham Abbey, and on the top of the next hill it lay at our feet a fair picture, indeed a welcome one to that old sportsman, Mr. George Herbert Lee. No fear of being lost, and when the Master with keen sight got a view of the fox, and the huntsman clapped his hounds forward on the line, and some began to fall back, hug the road, and save their nags, Mr. Lee, who was riding his famous chestnut, might have been seen going stronger than ever as, running within two fields of the town, we turned back to climb up the hill towards Monkhams to see hounds stopped in the valley below. For at 4.15 it would have been a little too dark to have disturbed Galley Hills, though it was not too late for Mrs. Bowlby and several other ladies,* who were some twenty miles from home, to witness the finish. Back in the cutting blast that froze as it blew, bringing a frost which stopped all hunting on Monday at Swallows Cross.

Mrs. MacIntosh's horse "Maquet"

"Maquet," a dark bay mare standing 16 hands, by "Rackrent" by "Haymaker" dam by "Delight," a favourite hunter of Mrs. McIntosh, Havering Park, Havering-atte-Bower, is as good as she looks. Bred by G. White, of Westmeath, Ireland, and purchased from Mr. James Christy,

* The Miss Blyths were twenty-two miles from home.

of Writtle, she carried off the first prize for hunters, up to not less than 14 st., at Champion Lodge; and at the Essex Agricultural Show, held at Harlow, in 1892, she was adjudged the best hunter in the show. Since that time Mrs. McIntosh has not shown her, but has hunted her regularly and found her a delightful mount.

Mrs. Gerald Buxton on "Phroso"

Mrs. Gerald Buxton on "Phroso" is another of those who are able to share the pleasures of Fox-hunting with a partner equally fond of it. She has inherited all the love of the sport which runs in the Pease family, and is sister to Mr. A. E. Pease, who wrote the "History of the Cleveland Hounds" and other sporting books, and of Mr. J. A. Pease. Both brothers have won the House of Commons Point-to-Point. "Phroso," the animal upon which she is depicted, is a fair type of the class of horse which, with perfect seat and good hands, she rides with so much judgment and discretion with hounds.

Mr. E. Quare's Harriers meeting at Mr. George Hart's Farm, Thornwood Common, on December 5th, 1896

"Ah! give me a sportsman, in him you will find
A sweet combination of merits combined,
A friendship the same to the end."

PHILLPOTTS WILLIAMS.

No one in Essex offers you a heartier welcome when hounds meet at his house than Mr. George Hart. There is no meet in the county I like better than one at Canes, whether it be with fox, stag, or hare. Little fear, then, of refusing the following invitation, which reached me by hand on the Saturday—

Mr. QUARE'S HARRIERS,
to-day,
Thornwood Common,
11 o'clock.

Canes, Saturday, December 5th, 1896.

And to the meet we went. A deluge of rain had fallen in the night, accompanied by a violent gale from S.S.E., which at Brighton had swept away the old chain pier, but beyond flooding the fields with water, turning the ditches into brooks, and the brooks into rivers, there was little local evidence of its force; but we were glad to crowd into the stackyard to escape the remaining squalls, while Mr. Jerrard seized the opportunity of taking a group of the Master and his hounds.

At the meet, in addition to the Master, his daughters, Mr. Costerton, Mr. George Hart and his two sons, we had the pleasure of noticing Mrs. Bowlby and the three Miss Bowlbys, who ride so well, Mrs. Gerald Buxton, Miss T. Buxton, Mrs. W. Sewell and Miss Dorothy Sewell, Miss Steele, Mrs. Redwood, Mr. Horner, Mr. Harrison, Mr. P. M. Evans, Mr. Radford, Mr. Howard, Mr. Avila, Mr. A. Sewell, Mr. Walter Jerrard, Master R. Willis; on wheels, Miss Madeline Yerburgh and Miss Mildred Stokes.

Mr. Quare has a very efficient first lieutenant in Mr. Costerton, who, although he has only one arm, goes like a bird, and is always with the hounds, which he loves. Maiden is no whit behind him in keenness and capacity, and is a workman across country, and must be a very reliable man at home if the excellent condition of the hounds is any criterion of what can be done by care and attention. But there is an old adage, "Good masters make good servants"; so we are not surprised to hear of the excellent sport Mr. Quare is having with his pack, and the hearty welcome which is extended to him on every side, and which on a very recent occasion was further marked by his being made the recipient, at the hands of one of the Masters of the Essex Fox Hounds (Mr. E. S. Bowlby), of a beautiful silver horn, subscribed for and given by some of the many admirers of the able way in which he hunted his beagles in the past, and the brilliant manner in which he now sustains the traditions of the historic pack so long and so memorably connected with the names of the late Mr. Henry Vigne and the present Master of the Puckeridge Hounds (Mr. E. Barclay). Mr. Hart had no intention of allowing us to spend a morning in the forest, for in the three grass fields near Duck-lane (fields which provided the late Mr. Vigne with hares that afforded him some of his most brilliant runs) he had a shrewd suspicion we should find, and he was right.

A hare jumping up in view in Barn field, hounds settled to run hard; the Secretary* of the Essex Stag Hounds, together with Mr. Avila and Mr. Evans, getting to work at once as they charged the rails beyond the ditch in the first fence. Mr. Costerton, Mr. Howard on his grey (another good

* Mr. Harrison.

sportsman with the use of only one arm), following him closely, as without checking, hounds ran at a great pace straight for Rundell's, over a delightful line of country, throwing up in the field beyond it near the Hastingwood Common road; getting another view of their hare, they coursed up to her and fairly pulled her down in the open.

When we reached the road after this sharp burst and brilliant finish, and began trotting off in the direction of Canes, and the hand of the dial pointed to the suggestive hour of one, we made a pretty good guess at what was in store for us. The capacious crewyards and stables held all our horses, hounds were kennelled, and the hospitable board was soon relieved of its tempting viands, and we drank Mr. Hart's health, and wished him good luck for many a year to come in beverages as varied as they were pleasant and refreshing.

Mr. Jerrard, sen., now joined us on a horse lent him by our host, and Mrs. Waters arrived in time to see another hare found, but scent was as bad in the afternoon as it had been good in the morning. However, Mr. Avila and Mr. Evans wouldn't look at a gate, and kept popping over the fences, leading us all on, until at last there was a fearful splash, and looking back, only the head of Mr. Jerrard's black horse could be seen gazing on the greensward out of a flooded ditch, while his rider held on manfully to the reins. Thank goodness, he's all right, we ejaculated, as we thought of the photographs uncompleted, and the views that had to be taken, but we sighed for a kodak as he gave that last tug which landed the black once more on *terra firma*. Mr. Jerrard, his son, Mr. A. Sewell, and young Mr. Hart were the only ones—can we confess it? may we make an excuse? (mine, the first day's hunting for a horse* very much out of condition)—who stuck to the Master and his staff to the end.

On the same day those out with the fox hounds at High Easter had a capital day's sport, running almost to Felstead. During the run a lady† who rides very straight with our hounds had a most providential escape from being killed in one of those terrible ditches that abound in the Roothings. How ladies have the nerve to face them has always astonished me. They ought never to attempt to cross our Roothing country unless they are riding a perfect hunter (he cannot be too well bred) that can jump big at the shortest notice. Nor should they forget that there is safety in pace and a good take-off with a fair landing; but what business have I to suggest anything to those accomplished horsewomen who put us poor mortals to the blush when it comes to the question of riding across a difficult country. No! rather let me relate what happened on Saturday, and let us take a lesson from the calm courage and self-possession displayed by the rider as she lay under her horse at the bottom of the ditch with only her chin out of the water, and completely hidden from the sight of those who rushed to her rescue. All credit to those plucky fellows who, regardless of consequences—one man‡ was kicked—seized the horse's hind legs with their arms and pulled him back along the ditch off the rider. It took twenty minutes to extricate the animal.

The run from Sir Charles Smith's coverts, on Monday, December 7th, was out and out the best thing of the season '96-97 up to that date. A numerous company assembled at Bobbingworth Windmill, among them Col. Lockwood, M.P., at the sight of whom the huntsman directly exclaimed, "We shall have a bad day now!" Why he should have associated unlucky days with the Colonel's too rare appearance in the hunting

* Pinafore, own sister to Midshipmite. † Mrs. Crocker. ‡ Captain Bruce.

fields of late years is still a matter of conjecture. But there were others besides the Colonel, including both Masters, Mr. E. S. Bowlby, Mr. Arkwright, Mr. Avila, Mr. F. Ball, Mr. E. A. Ball, Mr. Ford Barclay (hardly recovered from his recent accident through his horse swerving against a tree as he jumped, and to take another roll before this day was over), Mr. Baddeley, jun., Mr. Barron, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Gerald Buxton, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Captain and Mrs. Bruce, Mr. David Christy, Capt. the Hon. W. D. Cairns, Mr. W. S. Carr, Mr. T. Cowee (out for about the first time this season), Mr. A. W. Craig, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Crossman, Mr. G. H. Dawson, Mr. A. J. Edwards, Mrs. Fane, Capt. Glynn, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. Giles, Mrs. Heseltine, Miss Jones (riding her father's big chestnut, a

Bobbingworth Mill

youngster) Mr. G. H. Lee, Mrs. McIntosh, Miss Morgan, Mrs. Neill, Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. Patchett, Q.C., Mr. Radford, Capt. Ricardo Mrs. W. H. Sewell on "Jack," Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. D. Cunliffe Smith, Mr. Washington Single, Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. J. Tyndale White, Mr. Waltham, and Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C.

How many of these saw the run 'twould be impossible for me to relate. Doubtless most of them, to their own satisfaction, for when we pulled the fox down at Gaynes Park, the majority were there, so I shall only take liberties with the few names that came under my personal notice in attempting to describe the actual line of country traversed by hounds, which if measured straight on the map between the points touched, covers ten miles, and to assume at least twelve in the 55 min. to Gaynes Park Woods would be no exaggeration. Breaking at the end of the big wood, he made for Ten Acres, and, doubling back almost immediately, Mr. Green, Mr. Tyndale White, jun., Mr. Single, Mr. Bevan, Mr. Avila, and

several more of us galloped straight through the wood, and came out with hounds, who now made for the Ice House covert, hanging there a moment and picking it up on the far side of the brook running down to the wood. There was a jam and a squeeze at the narrow hand-gate at the bottom.

At the fence beyond it, Captain Bruce was off his thoroughbred bay (which in the morning scurry had come down in a road, cutting its knee) to pick up the huntsman's cap. Hounds were now swinging down the ploughed field towards Knightsland, and there was no difficulty riding abreast of them. In and out of the Toot Hill road it was a toss up which side of Knightsland to go. Mr. Arkwright and the majority went left, Capt. Bruce went for the gate at the bottom of the field, on the right, while a few, including Mr. Bevan, Mr. F. Barclay, and Mrs. W. H. Sewell, jumped into the wood. Getting out of it was not an easy matter, for a deep sort of gully had to be walked down, and with only six feet run at the fence beyond it, between some broken-off rails and a tree, required a bold and clever horse. Mrs. Sewell's "Jack" was equal to it, and hounds were flinging forward over the grass in front of us to Berwick Lane, which Capt. Bruce and Miss Morgan had reached with them, and already they were threading the thick, overhanging briary fence beyond it. The Captain could not find a place, and it was a case of left or right to seek one. Fifty yards to the right there was an outlet, but the wrong side of the brook, fordable, as was soon proved, although it brought the black down, but did not delay "Jack," or the thoroughbred bay, as they turned sharp over it, and in the next field caught hounds who, instead of running, as many expected, for Ongar Park, a very usual line, made for the small covert Northlands, rented by Father Stubbings. Coming away from it, hounds fairly flew down the big stubble fields for Mr. Sworder's little covert. Mr. Avila—who was riding his little blood bay, by "King Ebor," with the hunter instinct inherited from its dam, "Baroness," the well-known brown mare that Mr. A. J. Edwards rode for so many years in Essex—leading over the briary bank, and we turned to Beachetts without drawing rein, Mr. Tyndale White remarking, as he swung open the big gate and galloped down the ride past the keeper's house, "This is an old-fashioned Monday."

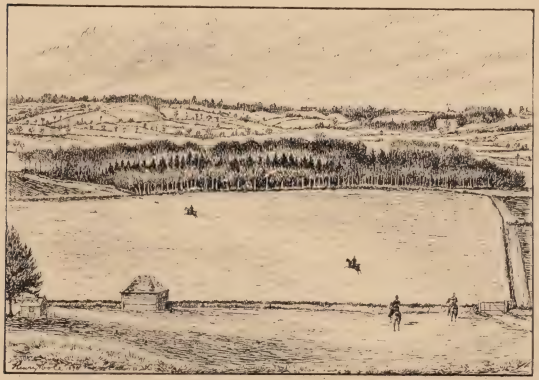
A moment's silence, and we knew that hounds were away in the open again, and a beautiful sight it was as we jumped out of the covert at the Mount end, over the crumbling bank and drop, Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., and Mr. G. H. Lee being two of the first out, to see the hounds streaming over the grass to Shalesmore, already a large body of followers with them: gate-openers most of them, thank goodness, for back swung the gate as the huntsmen and those who had gone with hounds through the wood galloped on without checking their stride, and turned sharp to the left for the next fence up-hill, Mr. Ned Ball on his bay having an early cut at it on the right of everyone. With the rise of the ground against us to the next fence by the small spinney, and "Save a jump," cried the huntsman as he and Mr. C. E. Green flew the fence, while we fumbled at a sticky gate. "Anywhere you like at my rails," cried Mr. Sworder, as he sailed away on his good black, going straight for his own stables, and we raced the bullocks for the next open gateway, and swung down the hill for Tawney Hall, with hounds tearing away on our left. The only refusal, Mr. Harry Sworder, of the day, on your good black, as you went at the thickest part of the fence, and your stable yard and a line of gates not a hundred yards to the right, but you had him over, and were in and out of the next road, near the Schools, quicker than anyone. The hounds were a bit tailed out now by the pace, and a sharp turn here, the fox was headed, they overshot it, and to work out the double the huntsman's aid was required. Over

the grass again at score, and over the bank, and over the line, for another sharp turn has caused hounds to over-run it, and made the Master use some naughty cuss words. Words which Col. Lockwood, in his witty speech on the occasion of presenting Mr. C. E. Green with the big brass pot, as he styled it, at the Holborn Restaurant the following week, declared that he never heard on the County Cricket Ground. Oh dear, no! If anyone missed an easy catch, it was, "So sorry!"—"Oh, that's all right! don't apologise," from Mr. Owen or Mr. Kortright. All the same, Captain Bruce, Mr. Crossman, and two or three more of us, didn't succeed in looking as innocent as we ought to have done.

Thomas Cowee on "The Rebel"

Away again for Shalesmore, Mr. Avila cutting a corner. Nothing like a farmer for going a short cut over a bit of wheat; he knows the price of it. Down the side of Shalesmore hounds tore along, and those who were nearest to them suffered for it, as half-way down hounds turned through the covert. Those who had selected the middle ride had a rare pull over the next two or three heavy fields, up-hill every yard. Hounds feathered a bit as they came away. Giving them plenty of room, Mr. E. Ball, Mr. Crossman, and Mr. Carr set to work to catch them again, as they ran very keenly when they got on the grass. "Can you get out of this?" asked the huntsman, as we jumped out of the Mount road. "Yes," we shouted, as

Mr. Harry Sworder returned the like answer at the same instant to Mr. Arkwright and Mr. Tyndale White. He had been relying upon a weak place in the thick fence with the double ditch which had to be reckoned with, for a few days previously harriers had been that way, and a gap was discovered; but now as he scanned it there was no gap to be seen, and too late he discovered a thick oak rail high up in the fence. Neck or nothing, as he felt the black meant having it. Did the horse know? Mr. Sworder thinks that he must have done, for he kneed it, and swept it far into the next field, for it was only laid in the hedge. On the left of that Mrs. Sewell was gallantly tackling it on the good little "Jack," and got through with a struggle. Many began to think the going heavy across Hill Hall Park, and when hounds, without the semblance of a check, went straight through Bush Wood and the next covert, and bore down the hill for Barbers, Mr. Ned Ball was not the only one who found his horse had had enough, as he



Running for Barbers

slugged his head on the bit. The light weights and those who had a bit of blood under them shot to the front, Mr. Avila and Mr. Sworder leading all the way to Barbers, and though some of the fences required jumping, horses' blood was up, and they would turn or jump just where you asked them, provided they were not done. Was Mr. Carr's getting pumped as it fell with him out of the lane into the field near Barbers? The huntsman's horse slipped round, and Mrs. Sewell gave him a lead through the brook into Barbers. With hounds to the far side ere they left it, for they were running in covert; out they came right under our feet, and swept down the wood side. Don't say we over-ride hounds, for we waited there for them, many of us, and the smile on the huntsman's face as he watched his favourites dashing and flinging across the open, before he jumped out of the wood, one that ought to have been kodaked. The leading

hound's name came readily to his lips as we asked him the question. "'Belvoir,' by the 'Belvoir Gordon,' a rare one to drive along." For the brook we all rode, and again did Mrs. Sewell give the huntsman a lead, as his horse cut it. A field beyond we had a view of our hunted fox. Mr. Basham will vouch for this, as he saw him come over the road dead beat, and hounds hit off his line up the grass fields to Gaynes Park. Ten minutes in the woods finished him, and some of the youthful members of Mr. Chisenhale Marsh's family, who were out on foot, were duly blooded. Methought the jovial expression on George Dawson's face, who was riding his good little grey, betokened that he, at least, was one of those who had enjoyed this run to the full.

A good horse, bought from Mr. H. E. Jones, carrying a good man in every sense of the word. Mr. Thomas Cowee's figure was at one time a very familiar as it was a very welcome one with the Essex Fox Hounds, for he was a thorough sportsman. Alas! the last few seasons his health has only permitted him to appear at rare intervals, where as an exponent of the art of crossing a country on a well-bred little 'un he had few, if any, equals (see portrait, page 114).

I have done it at last! Done what? my dear friend. Taken to cycling, driving a motor, or floating a company? Oh dear, no! Nothing half so exciting. I have left home late, made a guess at the country to be drawn, chanced the run of the season coming off in the morning, and without disturbing a covert hit the hounds off to the tick for their initial find, and this feat was accomplished this season for the first time on Monday last, though attempted before.

The Egyptian Sphinx is not more silent or discreet on the question of the afternoon draw than the present Hunt staff, and the variations in it are as problematical as the weather. No, not quite that; for the certainty of a wet day in this month of December, 1896, is hardly a subject for a wager.

A choice of two courses—the Colonel's coverts and Loughton Shaws, or Curtis Mill Green and Sir Charles's "Osiers." Impossible to try both with any success, and to hit off the wrong one—chagrin and disappointment, with a certain attack of *malaise*.

No need to bore you with the reasons that induced me to put all my eggs in one basket, and stake everything on Curtis Mill Green and the "Osiers," but will merely state that be-mackintoshed and covert-coated, in a heavy storm of rain, I set off on my solitary and speculative ride at twelve o'clock. The heavy clouds were driving up before a keen easterly wind, disclosing here and there a gleam of blue that mocked the rain showers as they came down to swell the glancing rivulets that fringed every road, while anon a brilliant rainbow lighting up a dense bank of black clouds bespoke fairer things, and the whole landscape was brought into the clearest focus, so that the scene of the third act in last Monday's exciting drama was vividly presented to us as we swung back the latched gate in the bridle road to Tawney Hall, and let the good little bay go up to his bridle, without hurrying him. Never hurry when you are on the look-out for hounds. Pull up, if you like, on a rising knoll and scan the horizon. If your horse is keen he will listen too, and catch the faintest note of horse or hound long ere it strikes your duller sense.

In the stable-yard at Tawney Hall no sign of life except the rattle of

watchdog's chain and his warning bark; the dial must be pointing to one, and my Knight of the Velvet Cap must have left the castle. Beyond the house, what a landscape offered itself! The floods were out, and no ford between Passingford Mill and the neighbouring village of Abridge would be of any avail should hounds cross Roden's yellow flood. The clouds were now gradually dispersing, though a dull grey mist seemed to be creeping up in their wake, and the rain-soaked overcoat was making itself felt, as we knocked at the closed door of the blacksmith's forge at Passingford Bridge and left it in his charge.

No signs of the chase at present; the busy hay-binder at the stack near the Osiers opining they would be too wet to hold a fox, and the Green in scarce better plight. No hurry, if we can reach the covert before hounds have left it. Keeping well on the right, up the track used by the cottagers to their homes (for there are several cottages in this wild spot, equally methinks free from the jurisdiction of the school-board officer and sanitary inspector), we accosted one of the natives, a civil-spoken fellow, who told of a fox lately seen, and the line he usually took (this in reserve for future use), and knew that hounds were expected that day. We plunged up to the girths as we rode on through a stream that divides the two coverts, and so up the muddy lane towards Pyrgo Wood, where, as we gained its outskirts, we saw a vision. Did it bring delight? Did it give encouragement? It should have done, but did not, for the covert-coated fair equestrian was trotting rapidly in the Navestock direction, the last in which we should have looked for sign of hounds. Following in her tracks for a few hundred yards—she was going much too rapidly to be overtaken—I could see nothing, but encountered first a man, from his speech an undoubted Irishman, from his nose, an explorer of fences, for it was cut in a manner that would have aroused the envy of half our thrusters at the end of a quick thing in the Roothings. He was anxious to impart information, and equally ready for a guerdon for what little he had to dispose of, though it was not worth a kopeck. Lower down, roadmen three, civil and anxious to put me right, but no clue beyond the lady and two or three horsemen who had been inquiring for hounds in that direction, and no sight of them near the coverts on the hill usually drawn at a Dagenham meet. Back at a trot towards the big wood, for it was turning chilly, after the slow ride up the sloppy lanes from the green—to turn in at the farmyard near it and accost the man cutting mangolds, and to be misled against my better judgment. "Oh, yes," he said, "hounds have done this wood; they have gone clean away; they were running hard below Havering before dinner."

It now being near two, with scant prospect of falling in with hounds, I turned homewards, intending to take the green on my way. Luckily, seeing a man at work improving a grass field, I rode up and accosted him, eliciting the following reply: "Well, if they 'ave been in that 'ere wood, they muss 'ave been uncommon still, for I 'aven' 'eard 'em." So now to return to my man with the mangold knife, and at the same instant to catch sight of a cloud of horsemen approaching Pyrgo Wood, and to reach the corner the moment the hounds were thrown in. The wind swept keenly round the covert. There were, however, but few seconds to wait, for a ringing halloa on the far side sent a joyous thrill through every nerve and fibre in my body. (I was on the right horse.) Down the woodside came a few horsemen, galloping towards us. They had mistaken the halloa, and the bay shied well into the field as he met them. Mr. Tyndale White, jun., was one, and when I saw him again he was so plastered with mud as to be hardly recognisable. The majority of his companions, however, who had taken their stand at the far corner of the grass field had turned back into the plough.

And what a plough it was! No wonder Mr. Price had a good following as he trotted the headland. No wonder few were really riding in wake of hounds across it, but were hugging the sides and making tracks for the grass, for the going was heavy and fences stiff in the line hounds were taking. Just time to catch sight of Mr. Waltham plunging through the first wood, followed by Miss M. Morgan, and to get clear of the ruck—and it struck me that there was a ruck and ample occupation for the secretaries on a blank day—and reach the road below Bower House, with hounds and their very few attendants a long way off on our left, and to find ourselves in good company—if pink cloth counts for anything—up to Bower House, to turn in opposite to it, pull up, and hear the maddening chorus of hounds in the wood at our feet, and Easterby's wild cheer as he viewed them away.

"A good turn," said Mr. L. Pelly, as we pressed on through the farmyard, with Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Miss M. Morgan, Mr. Waltham, Easterby, and half-a-dozen more, and struck the road at the same moment hounds crossed it into the park, with something left in our horses and something to be thankful for that we had caught them fairly at last, and with no intention of leaving them again while a kick or a jump was left in our nags. What a pace they went over the park! How quickly Mr. Waltham swung open the first iron gate, yet how long he seemed. "Bellows to mend?" we asked the huntsman as he overtook us in the next grass field, and "bellows to mend it was," he replied, for he, at any rate, had come the line. Up and down hill from Pyrgo Wood, and the best of the fun was nearly over, though the water flew up as horses were sent along over the fields fringing the brook and Hogg Hill. Mr. F. Green's stately residence was within easy distance as hounds drew up after this sparkling seventeen minutes, and there was time to note a few of those who had enjoyed it—Mrs. Bowlby, Mrs. McIntosh, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Crossman, Miss Fane, Miss Morgan, Miss E. Jones, Miss M. Morgan, General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Colonel Lockwood, M.P., Colonel Fane, Major Wilson, Mr. F. Green, Mr. E. T. Helme, Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. Ford Barclay, Mr. D. Cunliffe-Smith, Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. R. Y. Bevan.

Ongar Park.

Methinks any schoolboy or young lady who attended the meet of the Essex Foxhounds at North Weald on Monday, January 4th, in the year of grace 1897 (and there was a merry band of them), will, when he or she has grown up, cherish a very tender regard for the noted woodland of Ongar Park, from which such a famous run took place on this memorable occasion.

Few large coverts within the confines of the Essex Hunt offer greater difficulties, whether to the tyro or the old stager, for getting away on good terms with hounds; and many a man, unless steeped as deep in the mysteries of woodcraft as a Hart, a Sworder, or a Waltham, has been left behind in many a famous run to gnash his teeth and bewail his fate. Let a good fox take but one turn round this extensive covert; let him, as he is nearly safe to do, put up a comrade which, may be, a few of the tail hounds will set to work to hunt noisily and vigorously

on their own account, confusing you with the two lines, the two choruses with which the woods are now echoing. Let our first friend, the good fox, break at short notice on the Toot Hill side, or in the Blake Hall direction, when you have been pinning your faith on his making for Gaynes Park or the Beachetts, and you will be more than lucky if you see anything of the hounds again before the run is over.

But on Monday last everything worked propitiously, except (and there is always an exception to everything, however good it may be) to a few who, relying upon a day in the woods, had

Leonard Thomas Carr

ridden up late, or saved their horses for a better meet. Two minutes, nay one, and the lady on the rich dark-coated thoroughbred, who shot across the muddy lane that divides the Gaynes Park preserves from the Ongar Park woods would have been too late, for at that moment a distant "Halloa" came floating back on the breeze, far down the dark wood, as having ridden with one or two more leisurely, and unsplashed, up the muddy lane, we followed her down the broad middle ride of the covert, to turn off with the late Master at the first chance on the right, for hounds appeared to be making for the Toot Hill side, although the force of the tide still set with a strong

current up the middle ride, down which the huntsman and his numerous followers had dashed.

Scarcely had we reached the end of the ride before another "Halloa," this time far away near Toot Hill, could be heard, and the sight of a few red-coats, already coming away from the wood, warned us that there was not a moment to be lost. Not staying to listen to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely, up hill and down dale, on the hard resounding road, we raced for the point where the huntsman, with vigorous notes on his horn, was drawing his hounds together from the covert, while the Master held the eager crowd in check which, the moment he released his hold, burst like a torrent, and swept over the road in hot pursuit, as the hounds struck the line on the good scenting ground that spreads away from Ongar Park to Knightsland, Shalesmore, and Beachetts.

Each man for himself and the hounds for us all, was the cry, as bearing at first to the right men took their fences at the gallop, and in less than a minute they were racing for the brook at the bottom of these meadows. Mr. Green was in luck, hitting off the same place where he and Major Wilson on his grey left us all behind in the fog last year, and was followed over that 10 ft. plank by Mr. Newman Gilbey on his new purchase, the good black. On the right of these, for a place he liked better, Mr. Gerald Buxton might have been seen fanning along with a large following, while coasting down it in blank despair rode a crowd who were lucky if they extricated themselves in time to get through the ford and hand gate on the left before all the fun was over; while without knowing of its existence Mr. Edwards, Mrs. Carter, Mr. John Tyndale White, Mr. Cockett, Mr. Ford Barclay, and one or two more, struck it without drawing rein. Hounds still favoured those on the left, for they swung right across them under Northlands, and raced hard for Knightsland. In and out of the briery lane with Messrs. Edwards and Barclay at the double, over the half-concealed ditches—the next drop fence in your stride, and in and out of the corner of Knightsland, or a swish through the bullfinch after Mr. White's red-ribboned grey, would have landed you in time to see hounds at their first check, and without their huntsman. The fox, a good one, had gone on, and with forces somewhat augmented, Mr. Tyndale White on his roan swung open the gate into the road below Knightsland, as the line led on over some terribly heavy ploughed land. Just time to catch sight of Mr. Seymour Caldwell jumping a wide ditch into a narrow grass meadow, and to hear the

crash of the gate which Mrs. Carter, gallantly charging, carried away as her horse slipped up at it, and to thank our buttons we hadn't to come into the road over the high bank which the Master, the huntsman and Captain Bruce tackled just below Stanford Hall Farm, and we were cruising up the road for the bridge over the brook, Mrs. Arkwright being one of the first to jump out over the quickset hedge as she followed the Master's lead. In a few minutes we had run up to Kettlebury Springs after twenty to twenty-five of the best, and before we

Knightsland Wood

left them there was time to take stock and note some of the bold young Nimrods, and youthful and fair Dianas who had ridden over this rough country. Guy Edwards and his brother Noel, who later on in the day took a toss which in no way disconcerted him, Charlie Green and his big brother, Vivian, and Eustace Pelly, Harold Marsh, Maurice White * (he'll soon be going into tails) and a boy on a long-tailed bay, Miss Steele, Miss Georgie Waters, and Miss Dorothy Sewell and many more unknown to me, but not forgetting a boy with a big pair of spurs and a very small pony.†

* He got a commission in '99, and sailed for the Cape. † Tom Carr's son.

Shortly after leaving Kettlebury Springs, as we were riding in the direction of Greensted, after threading a narrow plantation where the first whip had a difference of opinion with his horse about jumping out of it, and just after Bailey had dismounted to open a gate (near a wire-guarded fence), and Mrs. Carter's chestnut had landed her over one, this time without touching it, out of a muddy lane A FOX—NOT A BOB-TAILED ONE

Miss Georgie Waters on Gipsy

—jumped up in view, and hounds fairly raced him into Greensted Wood. From this point we embarked upon a first-class hunting run, slow but sure, travelling forward all the time over a good country *viâ* Dewley Wood over the Ongar road by Bobbingworth Hall Farm, Mr. Milbank giving us a cheery greeting as we rode through his yard. Running nearly to Moreton we held away for the Lavers, and ran up to our fox —a bob-tailed one—(where did we change?) in Belgium Springs. A turn or two round the covert, one good ring in the open, and he just saved his bob-tail by getting to ground in the identical burrow that baulked us of a good gallop on the opening day of the season from Matching Park.

One hour and forty minutes we had been on the move. The time is correct, for the Major checked it, and many one

horse men and those who, like Mrs. and Miss Fane, had long distances to ride home, left while they were trying to dig the fox out, few of us being sorry that they did not succeed in doing so until hounds had left the scene of action—and he whisked his bob-tail as he scampered off quite ready for another spin before the boys go back to school.

The next draw was Mr. R. C. Lyall's cellar, and we filled the drive as we waited our turn for his excellent sherry and Christmas cakes. We were not expected at Harlow Park. With drains unstopped and the earths open we were lucky in having a nice little hunt by Parndon Woods to Nasing Common, the field gradually dwindling away by twos and threes until you might have counted them on one hand. As the horn played "Dulce domum" the mist crept up from the south'ard, wrapping everything and everyone in its chilly embrace.

"Ongar Park in the Fog" would have formed a fitting headline for the notes of last Monday's sport from North Weald. For be it known that we met there again, hardly having disturbed a twig of the draw on the previous occasion. Yes; and in a dripping fog we mustered, and were greatly surprised to find that in spite of its density they meant hunting.

Hounds were punctual and Masters too. Not that this calls for any special comment, for they are never otherwise, a very great addition to the pleasure of hunting with any pack of hounds, you'll all readily grant: and when hounds were thrown into covert there was a steady determination evinced not to lose sight either of them or their huntsman. A fox broke over the same ride as Monday last, but without going for the open, was viewed again towards the Gaynes Park end ere the huntsman laid on his hounds. There I saw them feathering for an instant, the huntsman in their midst, among the tree stubs; the muddy ride filled up immediately, as people pressed down it, for hounds had begun to race for Beachetts. With horses galloping behind and in front of you it was impossible to hear anything, and the fog blotted out all vision beyond 150 yards in the wood and 300 in the open, but still as we reached the wood the cry was the same, "They have gone for the Beachetts."

Only those who lost not a second here by galloping round the covert, or plunged through the middle ride, almost up to the horses' girths, without slackening rein, were with hounds as they cleared the wood and came away for Shalesmore; and in that select band, they tell me, might have been seen Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Miss Jones, Col. Fane, Mr. Avila, Mr. Bevan, and Major Wilson, at least they were with hounds when they left Shalesmore, to which they fairly flew. The line delightful, nearly all grass—most of you know it—and the pace good enough for the rails and ditch beyond, just below Shalesmore, thought Mr. White and Mr. Avila as they jumped them stirrup to stirrup. The Major, too, voted the pace ultra till the bay put him down in the road. Up the heavy field of Mr. Sworder's hounds swung, crossing the brook, where it wanted doing, and with a piping scent flew on to Mr. C. Fitch's, Spinney Hagmore (what a name!), *and here they dished the lot.*

"How trifling a cause will oft lose us a run!
From the find to the finish how few see the fun!
A mischance, it is call'd, when we come to a halt;
I ne'er heard of one who confess'd it a fault;
Yet we're all of us tailors in turn—"

sang Egerton Warburton.

Now comes the interesting question—only to be answered by those who fairly got away with hounds—whether it is more provoking to be left behind in the middle of a run, having successfully overcome the principal difficulty of getting away from a big woodland in a fog, and having fairly held hounds for 15 minutes in the open at best pace, or not to have got away at all? It is a question that will frequently crop up when you hunt in a fog, since for one that gets away with hounds five will be left behind, and the most trifling impediment to your progress out of the common run, such as an awkward brook, a locked gate, a wired gap (we put such *certainties* as canals and railways out of the question), and those who have got away, will join the nomad band of discontented explorers, and scientific enquirers of *have you seen the hounds?* and to them, and to those who have not seen a yard of the run, will come home some very searching questions. A good many ifs; the "If" this time with a very big I for those who did get away. If I had only jumped in and out of that plantation (Hagmore) with hounds I should have been all right, and so you would. But if you hoped, nay, almost relied on seeing hounds again as you rounded the spinney, you made a mistake such as Hervey Foster never would have perpetrated, for if he once got away with hounds in a fog he glued himself on to them. But up to here it must have been a rare nice gallop, and little question in my mind, since half a loaf is better than no bread, that it were better to have ridden up to that point to the music of hounds, as their phantom forms flitted through the mist, than not to have started at all, and only to have caught the faint chime of hounds coming back unattended into Beachetts, and to mark them divide, as $5\frac{1}{2}$ couple struck the country beyond the woods towards Coopersale, and ran on to Gaynes Park.

A fox even may lag behind too long in a fog, especially if he makes no allowance for the fact that the further he goes the warmer his jacket becomes. 'Twas a pretty sight when hounds hit on the drag of a crafty, dodging, stay-at-home-if-possible customer, near the gravel pits just as we were *en route* for Weald Coppice. 'Twas cheering to gallop through the woods to their babbling chorus as they spelt out every yard of twisting line through the Forest into Gaynes Park, and crossing the muddy lane, got on better terms with him in Ongar Park. 'Twas better galloping in the open towards North Weald station than whirling through it in the Ongar express; but 'twas maddening to lose hounds for the second time in the fog as they turned back over the line beyond North Weald and swept back to the big woods—not a soul near them except Jack, who had not crossed the line, and only a porter on the metals to confirm the intelligence as we galloped under the bridge beyond Ongar Park Farm. At the top end of the woods many fresh prints of horses' feet going in the direction of Toot Hill made us again think hounds were having a stinger in the open. If so, little chance of catching them; so home through the woods past the grinning keepers. Quite a bevy of them—quite a chorus of "Never saw hounds streaking along so fast in my life," "Gone at least twenty minutes." "Must have nearly reached Whitechapel by this time," chimed in that veteran Wright. "Only one with them, couldn't say who, for he swept by like a spectre horseman."

Up with your coat collars, Messrs. Swire and Smith, and home for T,

since neither hounds nor huntsman you'll see again this day—and yet, hark a moment. Is not that a whip calling hounds together! No mistaking that "Ku-up along, hounds." Some hounds, at any rate, are near, and at the bottom of the wood we met Jack returning with the full muster, which he had succeeded in stopping at Gaynes Park: but no huntsman, and we left Messrs. Ball, Green, Bevan, and the Master going to look for him as we rode homewards, with a deeper veneration than ever for Ongar Park, and a weightier sense of the difficulties of riding to hounds in a fog.

Miss Ethel M. Jones

Miss Jones's name occurs a good many times in these pages. It could hardly be otherwise where any attempt is made to give the names of the leaders in the runs that are herein described. Miss Jones is one of those ladies whose presence in the hunting field is ever welcomed by the keenest and most enthusiastic follower of the hound and horn, for she always rides her own line. In her early days with the Essex Hounds she used to follow her father; now, in 1899, if I am not much mistaken, her father is very glad if he can follow her, as he

knows that his place will then be a good one when hounds are running.

Snatched from the Frost.

And so it looks as I pen these lines on Wednesday evening (January 20th, '97), after as good a day's hunting as one could wish for. Were we not stopped last Saturday; and on Monday the country was white with snow, which thawed too slowly on Tuesday to make any but those as sanguine as the young Haileyburian hope to be out on the morrow.

With a dull leaden sky and searching east wind, freezing as it blew, and roads covered in many places with frozen snow, on Wednesday morning even my sanguine Peter Leather doubted hounds going, or if they did, not

Tattle Bushes

before twelve. Many others relied upon a late meet, and taking it easy, did not arrive in time to see hounds thrown into the first covert, Tattle Bushes. I know no prettier covert than Tattle Bushes (the Punch Bowl of the Hunt) from which to see a fox go away. Standing as it does on an eminence from which the grass pastures slope sharply down to the vale below, it commands a lovely view over the Lea Valley far away into Hertfordshire, the dome of Haileybury College being a conspicuous landmark in the far distance, while nestling at your feet is the historic building "Nether Hall," at one time supposed to have been connected with Rye House by a subterranean passage.

The moment hounds were thrown in there was a crash of music from the big dogs. "A fox!" said Mr. James Green, of Todd's Brook. Scarce were the words out of his mouth before a scream from the bottom end

warned us that there was not a moment to lose, and those on the wrong side of the fence at once turned back with Dr. Love and the boy on the long-tailed bay for the gate, and down hill we sluthered and slid over the slippery grass as horses snatched at their reins, hounds running straight for Nether Hall. Just under it they turned, and taking us over several deep holding fields, began to scale the hill for Roydon Park.

A lucky turn for some of the late arrivals we had come at best pace, and you could take no pull at your reins as you galloped through the plantation. The Master, Major Carter, Mr. N. Gilbey, Mr. H. Jones, Mr. C. E. Green, and Mr. Howard Fowler going up and out of the rough field beyond as quick as anyone, and so nearly up to Roydon Station. One more turn, and leaving Tattle Bushes behind, our fox set his mask for a country that is probably better known to the present Master of the

The boy on the long-tailed bay

Puckeridge, Mr. E. Barclay, than anyone else, for many a hustling he has given a long-tailed one from the low-lying meadows (for which we were making), driving them to the sanctuary of the Galley Hill coverts. Alas! that this fair grass country should be so spoilt with wire, and very little time elapsed after crossing the road below Nether Hall before we found ourselves in its meshes, and hounds running on alone and unattended. Mr. Avila led one band for some distance, jumping each fence in fear and trepidation, while Mr. Charles Green, having tackled a fence wired each side, carved out a line across country on his own account, while Bailey, who had been thrown behind by his horse refusing one of the wide marsh ditches, made off towards Galley Hills with the majority of the field after him. It was not long, however, before Mr. Avila and those that were following his bold lead, including Miss M. Buxton, Mr. Ford Barclay, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. Giles, and the boy on the long-tailed bay, were

driven back by the wire to the canal path, where intelligence was gleaned that hounds were running close at their fox along its margin. We wanted a native guide badly, for the further we rode the canal side the further we were riding from any known coverts, and remoter every moment became our chances of seeing hounds again, should they after all have gone for Galley Hills. However, once having made up your mind, stick to it; so a dozen of us followed, not Mr. Avila in his second essay over the meadows, but held on until we had definite news of hounds.

H. W. Horner on "Rupert"

Mr. Horner, like his father, is very fond of hunting. A hard rider without any jealousy, he much prefers his own line to gap shoving, and although he only keeps one horse, he manages to get as much real enjoyment out of that one as some men do out of twenty. The chestnut gelding on which he here figures is by "Reveller," dam by "Randolph," and although his owner is a welter weight, he rarely ever comes down.

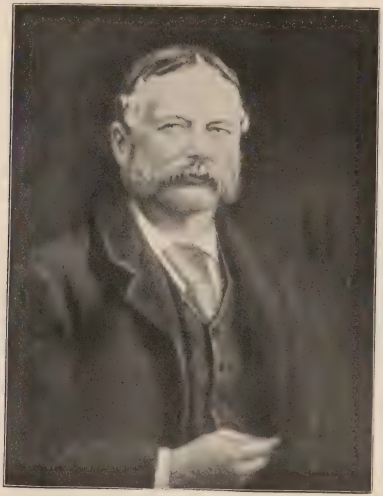
Galloping down a deep lane in places up to your girths for about half a mile, we had hounds in view running ahead. At the end of the lane a locked gate yielded to the united efforts of three individuals, and then we breathed again, for we had recovered hounds, even if they had lost their fox. Mr. Charles Green coming up, and no huntsman in sight, he proceeded to cast them, Major Wilson turning them to him as he whistled them softly. Just at the critical moment of waving them on, his horse went head over heels into a bog, and by the time he had picked himself up, recovered the hounds and charged a great hairy fence, which his bay horse did most beautifully, Bailey and his following could be seen in the distance

"The Admiral"

coming towards us. Making nothing of it, he held the hounds up to Mr. Bury's plantation on the hill, where the hunted fox had evidently taken refuge, for out he came with a comrade; but sticking to their old friend, hounds pushed him round in a circle up hill again, "The Admiral" making daylight through some binders on the top of a bank about twelve feet high. The good black, scrambling up its side, crashed into and through the binders at a stand, while Mr. Duke Horner and the boy, having looked admiringly on, thankfully followed. There was absolutely no other outlet for those on that side of hounds as they ran for Mr. Charles Bury's policies. Two or three circles round them, three attempts to save

himself by getting to ground, and the old grey customer had to pay the penalty exacted from all chicken robbers. Even the sherry and cake so freely offered and plentifully partaken of hardly served to warm us as the keen blast blew right through one after the hot gallop.

Better known in the Essex hunting field under the above title, Mr. E. Pelly is a *real customer* across country, and runs Bailey close in the art of boring through a thick place. In fact, the thicker the fence the better he and his black like it; they rarely part company, and may always be seen in the front. "The Admiral's" early life was spent at sea (hence the *sobriquet*), and if you would learn how in 1898 he chanced to have a box of the choicest Manilla cheroots which had come into his possession twenty years previous to the late Spanish-American war, you must go to the fountain head. All I can say here is that they were uncommonly good, and that the flavour was not lost as he recited the story that accounted for their possession.



Charles Bury

The late Mr. Charles Bury lived on the Hertfordshire side of the Essex country, but this never deterred him during the

many seasons he hunted with the E.H. from attending any of their most distant meets in the Saturday country. He thought nothing of hacking out twenty miles, hunting all day, and coming back the same distance; and if he generally stuck to the road he made no attempt to disguise the fact, and would as soon have thought of jumping a fence during the twenty years I knew him as the late Mr. Henry Vigne. Yet like Mr. Vigne he dearly loved hunting, dearly loved to talk over a good run. He did all in his power to encourage and foster the sport, and though at times inclined to take a

Vicarage Wood

pessimistic view of affairs venatic, and think the country as far as hunting was concerned was going to the dogs, yet he did all in his power to arrest the evil day. Succeeding to an estate through which ran miles of wire (not barbed—it was not invented then) he had it all removed, and his "stick heap" was one of the surest finds in the county. Many a good run have we had from that, and many a good glass of brown sherry did we quaff at his hospitable doors before proceeding to evict one of his foxes; generally three in the Stick Heap then as there are now, when his son reigns in his stead at St. Leonards —a son who, having imbibed all his father's love of hunting,

holds with it an undergraduate's partiality for jumping, and goes very straight. There were few more popular men in the county of Essex than the late Charles Bury, few harder workers in all matters connected with county administration. It was a rare thing for him to have a single day free from some committee meeting or other, either at Waltham Abbey, Epping or Chelmsford—"*He died in harness.*"

Back at a trot for the Parndon Hall country, where we were joined by Mr. and Miss Peel, Captain and Mrs. Bruce, and Dr. Grubb. With fresh horses they were prepared for anything. To start with, the little steeplechase from Mark Hall to Weir Hatches, where the cut direct over the Vicarage iron railings was pointed out for one section by Dr. Love, nor dwelt he to see if there were any rash followers' necks to mend. Better, Major W——, if you had gone through the plantation with Mr. Peel, Mr. Howard, and Mr. Newman Gilbey. After this, as a forlorn hope, to Barnsleys in the icy wind.

Barnsleys? where do you generally get to from there? queried Sir Evelyn Wood, as the day was drawing in, and a train to town had to be caught. In the olden days—some call them the golden days—from Barnsleys to the Lavers was a very usual line, came the rejoinder, and on one occasion we reached Forest Hall. Little did we dream what was in store for us, or few of those who had a kick left in their nags would have gone home. 3.15, we found him (and so cold were my fingers that it was with the greatest difficulty I could restore the ticker to my waistcoat pocket), and to Harlow Park we ran him, barely touching the line on the first ploughed field. They quickened up a bit as they struck the grass, and kept us moving to Harlow Park, Mr. Gerald Buxton's horse giving him a nasty roll by galloping into a boggy hole near the covert, and a bold young sportsman riding Mr. Dent's horse, who had gone particularly well in the morning, took his own line and a purler into the lane *en route*.

The music in Harlow Park might have been heard at Canes as hounds drove their fox with a will round the covert, and forced him at 3.30 back over the common at hot pace for Barnsleys. Through the middle ride with Mr. Bevan and a few more we could see hounds running back and break on the Harlow side and hunt steadily by themselves (the huntsman was back in covert) over the pastures to Hubbard's Hall. There seemed to be a fair number of people with us at this point, but they fell off gradually as hounds, taking a line over the Harlow Road, ran over a capital country close to Thrushes Bush, by which time the field was fairly select, two ladies only riding to hounds, Mrs. Bruce on her favourite chestnut Roy, and Miss Peel on the well-known grey. Threading a small spinney, hounds ran steadily on over the snow-covered plough for Matching Park, which you would have staked your last shilling the fox meant entering, taking us over ditch after ditch, one blinder than usual nearly bringing Mr. Peel to grief. For some time it was a case of up and down with him and his horse, but the clever animal, clinging to the edge of the ditch like a fly to a ceiling, pulled through it all right, and as we turned for an easier fence, Mr. Newman Gilbey remarked to me, "*Ain't he a varmint?*" And as he meant, "Isn't he a customer across a country?" I heartily endorsed it. We all know that none of the old members of the Hunt can touch him for dash and quickness, and few indeed of the young ones either. Sir Evelyn Wood is

another wonder, but unluckily he missed this gallop, which was over a country he shines in.

Running close up to the Faggot Stacks, Mr. Giles, as he charged a bank into a grass field, thought it about time to come down, but picking himself up, got over well at the second attempt. The grass rode better than the plough, and we slipped away nicely over the next two or three fields, and leaving High Laver Hall on the right forty minutes from the time of leaving Harlow Park, Bailey had to throw up the sponge at Little Laver Mill. It was getting dark, and the rapidly hardening plough made the jumping very tricky. Mr. Dent, of Harlow, getting a fall over the last fence, made the baker's dozen who saw the finish. The Master, Mr. Arkwright, Mr. A. Peel and Miss Peel, Mr. E. Pelly on his good black—the only one, I believe, who on one horse had seen the whole day out, and seen it out, too, in his usual place—Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. Crossman on his wife's good black, Mr. Bevan on his new grey purchased from Major Green, and which carried him like a bird after emerging from the first ditch, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Captain and Mrs. Bruce and Mr. Giles. Roads were like glass hacking home, and for two long weeks the severe frost that set in stopped hunting altogether.

Monkhams

CHAPTER V.

Monkhams—The Romford Election—Mrs. Bennett—Snow-clad Fields—La Grippe—Joseph—This Side and That—High Easter—A Bad Start, blame it!—C. E. Ridley's Gorse—Doneraile—Walter Ridley—Fly-by-Night—Mrs. H. H. Elder—Sweep—H. H. Elder—The Miller—Walter Green can't raise a halloa—One outlet—Stirrup to Stirrup—Four down—Deer Park—Tresham Gilbey—Rev. R. L. Scott—Joan—Passingford Bridge—Rev. J. H. R. Pemberton—The Mottled Horse—W. Patchett, Q.C.—R. C. Lyall—Solomon—How we killed the Colonel's Fox in the Puckeridge Country—Abridge—J. E. Tabor—R. D. Hill—Business—Dandy Dick—No ice in the coffee—W. Maitland Tower—Bomerang—Yokohama—Arthur Capel-Cure—T. C. T. Warner—The Axe and Compasses—On Foot—The King William—Lords Wood—That's one of 'em, Cramphorn.

NASING Common on the card used to be the *bête noir* of hunting men in the winter months, for it generally meant a frost. In this season, however, of 1896-97, Passingford Bridge has acquired an unenviable reputation. Twice already has it been put down for a Monday's meet and each time frost has stopped proceedings. Let us hope that at the next attempt we shall have better luck. No one thought it fit for hunting: no, not even the youngest and most enthusiastic of a band of brothers, all of them very fond of the game, whom we overtook near Tawney Hall, as, in company with our secretary (Mr. Bevan) and the hunt staff, we jogged towards the meet. Mr. Sworder had not mounted his good black, but although he came on afterwards he did not alter his opinion that any attempt to ride across country (at least, over fences) with the bone still in the ground would be a very risky proceeding—a conviction that was shared equally by the dozen or so who had ventured to the meet; the practicability of killing a fox (although the tempting bait of a crisp five-pound Bank of England note was not lacking), without jumping a fence, not appearing feasible to the huntsman in the Passingford Bridge country. Mrs. Bennett, Miss M. Buxton, Miss Jones, Mr. D. Cunliffe-Smith, Mr. Swire, Mr. Gregory, Mr.

Washington-Single, and Mr. Gordon Lobb were among those who rode to the meet and back for exercise, none of them volunteering to go on to Romford to assist the candidates for Parliamentary honours. And what a narrow squeak the successful candidate had! To come down from 1,827 to 125 will remove, as Mr. Carlton Roberts observed, the dangers of over-confidence created by four-figure majorities; and we may add, whether Tory or Radical, for we recognise no politics in the hunting field.

Mrs. Bennett on "My Treasure"

Mrs. Bennett is rather proud, and justly so, of her little mare "My Treasure," on which she is here depicted, since she bred, broke and made the mare herself into as clever a little hunter as you shall meet with in a day's march, e'en though it retains some of the impatience of youth—sire "Knappgelt," dam "La Mascotte" (the latter carried Mrs. Bennett most brilliantly with the Essex Hounds for twelve seasons). Perfect hands and perfect seat, Mrs. Bennett yields the palm to no one in the ease and grace with which she negotiates the intricate fences of the Essex Country.

There was little appearance on Wednesday, February 3rd, of being able to hunt, when the blinds were drawn up and the curtains thrown back, and the announcement was made that the snow was lying thick on the ground, but—a gleam of hope, just enough to make one forswear for once in a way a cup of tea before getting up—it was thawing fast. And so it was, and so it might do for twenty-four hours before the snow-clad fields in the neighbourhood of Epping would resume their wonted hue; but all the same, it was not a bad chance for conditioning horses, and hearing that hounds would be at Hatfield Heath, some eleven miles off, at 12, we left home at that hour on the chance of falling in with them, and, as luck would have it, arrived at Down Hall, the Matching side, to the tick, as hounds were being blown out without having found. Whether it was this, or whether it was the damp, heavy atmosphere, or the deep state of the ground, I cannot say, but it struck me that the riders seemed to be taking their pleasure very sadly. There seemed to be no life or go in the whole thing. Jack, the first whip, was laid up, and there only appeared to be half-a-dozen cheerful people at the outside. Mr. Jones was one of them, and a lady, on a very smart cob, in spite of the mud in her eye, another; but I think several of them wore a dismal, lugubrious—that's the word, pronounced loo-goo-bre-us, L., *lugubris*, from *lugere*, to mourn—expression, because neither Mr. Charles Ernest Green nor Mr. Roland Yorke Bevan were out, and many were the tender inquiries later on, as we stood in the middle ride of Matching Park, as to whether grippe—the grippe, or the *la grippe*, as Max O'Rell would say—had claimed either of them as a victim. We could not make it out; just Mr. Green's field, too, thirty-five all told.

But to Man Wood let me take you, after having pulled "Joseph" back a bit (*vide* "Rusticus Expectans" letters in the *Field*, he is always doing something funny with "Joseph"—and "Joseph" is a horse, mind you), so as not to interfere in any way with those who were on the ride and thirsting for a gallop. At Man Wood they found *instanter*—not that it appeared to interest Mr. Quare, Mr. L. Pelly, and two or three more who were County Councilling, urban districting, or some such parochial frivolling.

At Man Wood, corner side, down its icy, snowy and muddy lane we struggled, to find hounds away towards Row Wood, but inclined to come for Down Hall, and doing so right across our bows as we reached the road, flesh and blood (*vide* Hall Caine's new work in the *Windsor*) could not resist it, and bidding my faithful Peter Leather take it easy, "Joseph" hopped lightly out of the road (it was a bad place) and joined the riding brigade. With a field's start of any of them, of course hounds threw up, which gave me ample opportunity for gratifying the foremost pioneer's (Mr. Jones') curiosity as to how I had arrived there, and further ample leisure, when hounds did pick up the line, to note the gallant way in which the Major* (there was only one out) charged the snow-choked ditch, and to go last, yes, positively last (Mr. L. Pelly tried hard for the honor) over the gap the huntsman had found, while it made my flesh creep and hair stand on end to see the reckless way another man charged a fearful place, rather than wait to see "Joseph" perform. And so we reached Down Hall's outskirts, and eventually the Hall itself, where his lordship, on foot, informed me that we had brought the fox back which had left his preserves for Man Wood in the morning, and his keen ear was the first to catch the cry of hounds running again in the open for the Shrubs; so down hill we galloped and splashed our way o'er the flooded meadows at the bottom to find, in truth, that they were running, but without a yard of

* Major Carter.

scent. What could you expect? Not finding again brought a very unsatisfactory fox-hunting, but very useful conditioning day for horses and hounds, to an end. On Epping Plain the snow still lay thick as homeward bound we passed it 4.45 p.m.

This Side and That.

The glorious uncertainty of fox-hunting has often been spoken about, and as freely commented on, but never more clearly demonstrated than in the case of the Essex Hounds on Saturday and Monday last.

"On Saturday, February 6th, hounds were running all day, and during the greater part of it running hard."

"On Monday, with the exception of ten minutes in the woods, they never ran at all."

It was disappointing, as there were several out, including Mr. E. Helme, Major Paget, Captain Du Cane, who rarely pay us a visit, and we

High Easter

wished that they had seen the dog hounds of the Essex pack at their best.

Would that I had been out at High Easter on Saturday, and so wished a good many more who wandered about at North Weald on Monday between 11 and 12 waiting, for the eight degrees of frost delayed hounds, and listened to the glowing accounts of some of the fortunate few who had seen the great day through on one horse apiece, and of others who had found two horses hardly sufficient. There was no great point made by hounds, and no kill took place, but we believe that it is only a huntsman who looks upon a kill as the hall-mark of a sterling run.

Mr. C. E. Ridley said it was the best day that he had had for years. Mr. Ridley has hunted longer than most in the Roothings, and knows what a good run means.

Captain Du Cane: The best day he had had since he left Essex. (Did not hear where he had been hunting since he used to show us all the way over the Roothings.)

Mr. Jones: The best he had seen this season. We quite believe it also, that the Colonel was a wee bit tucked up next day, for we fancy he was not out on the previous Wednesday.

Mr. Douglas Crossman: The best day he had seen in Essex, and he has hunted two seasons, rarely, if ever, missing a Saturday. What a clinking good horse his bay must be, for he rode him through the whole of the day, and he finished up quite fresh, and ate his corn like a man on Sunday; and any horse Mr. Crossman rides has to go in the first half-dozen of the very first flight.

C. E. Ridley's Gorse

Mr. Tilling and Mr. Fitch both saw it out on one horse apiece, and it is more than probable that the honours of the first run from Garnetts to Dunmow High Woods belong to them, for arriving late at the meet after a seventeen-mile drive they were told as they neared Garnetts that they had found and were running, but not the fox, which passed close to Master Sam's feet. Giving a ringing view halloa, hounds came to the cry, and settled down for a real steady hunt, at pace fast enough and direction sufficiently straight to tempt a reverend gentleman well known in these parts to have a cut at a yawner, Mr. Sam pulling aside to let him go, and afterwards implored him to get off, when, going slap in, he looked like having his horse on the top of him.

In a subsequent run from Canfield Thrift they went much faster, Mr. Sam not being the only one who realised that a bad start, blame it, from the wrong side of the covert could not be made up. Running to High

Roothing Bury, they left off at Poplars, and only thirty at the finish at the outside. No horse appears to have died in the field—a not infrequent occurrence in old days, when a great day followed after a long frost—a circumstance, to say the least of it, that reflects great credit on those who have charge of their masters' studs that they managed to turn them out so fit. I have already remarked that many of us would have given a good deal to have been out. One enthusiast assured me on such a day he would rather have screwed up a horse than have missed it; but without going so far as that, we would have tackled the twenty miles to the first covert to be drawn had we known. Yes, had we known, or did we know, how many good runs would you miss? But, believe me, like everything else in this world, they would pall on you after a time if you could always ensure them, and the glorious uncertainty of fox-hunting would be robbed of half its charm.

C. E. Ridley on "Doneraile"

Mr. Ridley's name appears a good many times in Messrs. Ball and Gilbey's "History of the Essex Foxhounds," and this is natural, for 'twould be as impossible to write a history of the Essex Hounds without mentioning Mr. Ridley's name as 'twould be to leave him behind in a good run across his native

Roothings. No one knows that country better than he does; few in it do more to promote the welfare of foxhunting than he and his brother Walter, whose portrait is here given. Equally open-handed and generous to a degree when it comes to the question of getting up a subscription for some agriculturist who has met with misfortunes, a Ridley's name will generally be found at the head of the list. Mr. C. E. Ridley has planted a gorse covert in a favoured part of the country, which will be known to future generations as Ridley's Gorse. A sketch of it will be found on p. 138.

Walter Ridley on "Fly by Night"

I have given you this side—the gold, if you like it, of the medal. Will you glance at the other, silver or dross, call it which you will, that stamps itself on your memory as Monday's experience?

Do you think that the day began well, waiting some sixty minutes on a rather raw morning, with a blue mist circling in and out of the hedgerows, at a fixture which, for its plain surroundings, stands unrivalled in the trysts chosen for the meeting of the Clans (I have certainly no longing for a sketch or a photograph of a North Weald meet).

Into the woods by another route. I like these dodgements; makes people come to the meet—to find at once by the Butts "a leash." Hounds running on our right, the huntsman galloping parallel with us; a halloa on the left; half-a-dozen couple of hounds crossing our ride in full cry; the Master, Mr. Arkwright, muttering "they are on another fox"; and then for ten minutes ensued a stampede worthy of a panic-stricken crowd in Chicago. Men rode wildly in all directions, no face wore a smile, and "*Atra cura sedet post omnes equites.*" Pulling up I watched the game go on, thinking hounds must come back. Not so, thought "Peter," (that's my other horse, you must ken, *vide* friend Rusticus again). "Where are the hounds?" said an ex-Master and a gallant Captain. I felt quite flattered as I pointed out the line, and a company of fifty charged down that ride straight for the polo ground; while on the left, waiting for hounds that never came, and

Mrs. H. H. Elder on "Sweep"

eventually riding round by another track, came another squad of horsemen, led by one who, I thought, was never left behind in the woods. Tell it not, nor publish it abroad, that Harry Sworder was thus belated. After waiting as long as most, or as long as "Peter" would stand it, I trotted along after H. S., and came out near the polo ground, saw the slope from Gaynes Park House to the far coverts covered with skirmishers, spotted an ex-Master intently listening in the middle of the park, noted beyond the line of trees the bob of various hats; and, avoiding the hill, rode for them, to overtake them near Coopersale Bridge, and to find that after all it was the Master and his following whom I had credited with hounds. Light cavalry galloping up from the Ongar Road, videttes flying forward to Coopersale, everyone asking and no one knowing—where were the hounds?

Back by instinct to the Big Woods, and to catch the gleam of a scarlet coat* nigh Rough Talleys, to breathe hopefully and learn contentedly that

* The huntsman's.

no one with him he had stopped hounds when they crossed the railway. Would Lord Willoughby, or any of your crack amateurs, have done it? I fancy not, but you might have found out the sequel of the morning catastrophe, next morning, or perchance at Harlow Park in the afternoon, whither the fox was bound.

H. H. Elder on "The Miller"

So we were thankful, but all the same it was stroke No. 1 of bad luck—for there was a scent in the covert in the morning, and hounds had run well, and run with a will. More cheerfully for the Beachetts, and stroke No. 2 of more than ill-fortune befell us, for Walter Green—he of the crutches, who is noted far and wide for his halloaing powers—in fact, could give Baker a stone and a beating, who loves halloaing for the sake of halloaing as dearly as he loves hunting for the sake of hunting, and who always forsakes his last, for a day with hounds when they come to the Big Woods—as usual viewed a fox for us stealing away over a good grass country for Barbers, gave one expiring effort, the one we heard, and not another note could he raise, his cold rendering him as mute as a draft

hound from the noted Bark Hall Beagles. Bailey galloped to the cry at the brickfield end of Beachetts, listened for ten seconds for another halloa that never came, then, taking the hounds back into Ongar Park, we had time to eat our luncheon and forget our sorrows. Found another fox, but could not run him, ill-luck still dodging our footsteps, and so to coverts numerous without result, and as a climax to the whole thing with a brace in front of us at Kettlebury Springs, hounds could acknowledge neither. Anyone who religiously wades through these notes will, I fancy, admit that he has gazed on this side and that of fox hunting; but to real lovers of the game both sides of the medal have a gleam and lustre of their own, which

> "While the wind shall blow sweet through the woodlands,
> A blank day shall never tarnish or dim."

H. H. Elder on "The Miller"—"that right well grinds his corn," sang Mr. Bevan in his poem of Matching Green. At that time Mr. Elder was in the full swing of his enjoyment of the pleasures of hunting. His *camaraderie* and good fellowship in the hunting field we all know well. No more cheerful companion ever accompanied one to a meet or hacked home with you after a long day; and Mr. Elder was fond of a long day, and generally had a bit left in his horse at the finish. He was a good judge of a horse, and owned many a well-bred one in his time. "The Pearl," a thoroughbred chestnut mare, too hot for hunting, which I purchased from him, was one of the best harness mares I ever sat behind.

Mrs. H. H. Elder was photographed on "The Sweep" simply, she says, for the sake of the animal's portrait. Her numerous friends, however, will be very glad that she was taken with her favourite hunter, an animal formerly the property of Mr. Bevan, and very well known in the hunting field. After leaving Stondon Place in 1885, Mrs. Elder gave up hunting; her first essay with the E.H. having been in 1873, of which she retains a memento in the shape of a pad mounted as a paper knife, given to her by Mr. Walmsley, bearing the following inscription:—

> "Essex Hunt, 31 March, 1873, Theydon Grove, 2 hrs. 25 min.

On this occasion she was riding her husband's favourite mare "Kitty."

In Essex "a Leicestershire rush" is occasionally seen. The holloa away from Orange Wood was the signal for one on Wednesday, February 10th. There had been a bumper gathering at Epping Long green, which soon overflowed to the bottom of the slope of the first grass field on the south side of the covert, while the bitch pack drove their fox round the wood and forced him out at the top end. "One outlet" and *one only*, the fifty yards of high thorn fence with drop beyond 'twixt plantation and covert with two possible places in it, and 150 racing for them who went out first I can't say, but know that three of us went over in a wedge, the

lady first, as her horse swerved across Mr. E. Ball's big chestnut and we landed at her heels stirrup to stirrup. The Master leading up the covert side and a few fields further on with the crowd shaken off, a promising run nipped in the bud, not however, before four eager thrusters * at least had kissed mother earth, as clear of the throng they steered for the rough fence † at the bottom of the first ploughed field from the wood.

The day was as balmy as May, but the country never rode deeper. "Sooner be on the plough," said a man who two seasons back had sworn by the Pytchley grass, but he was right; for, given the rain, our ploughs always ride lighter than the turf; and so men and their fairer sisters were not disposed to take too much out of their horses when they came to the deep hilly covert of Galley Hill. At the Waltham end hounds found at once. Plain sailing at first, we held them to the top by the green ride on the right, but had to take to the wood rides as they turned sharp back (one fox breaking at our feet for Monkhams), but they were on another. For an instant we waited at the corner, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Buxton and Mr. Cook being a trio that got through as quickly as most with Mr. Walter Buckmaster, the Master, huntsman, Mr. Avila, Major Wilson, Mr. Horner, and many more, and round the covert they galloped to turn in and climb to the top through the deep poached rides and emerge at the Deer Park end, where they found a large number who had kept out of the woods, staking their little all on a dart from this point for the Copped Hall country.

Few of those who had won their way through the woods had strength of mind to resist their contagious example and make another attempt to get away. The Master, however, and Major Wilson, ever on the alert, could have been spotted quietly working back and none too soon, for they only gained the bottom end of the covert just in time to find hounds away in front of them up the lane past Monkhams in and out of the spinney at the top, and who were the half dozen out of the large field who had done the trick and reaped the reward of seeing hounds away over the open and the big holding woods left behind? Two names you have had, here are the others. The Admiral, Mr. Avila and Mr. G. H. Lee and the huntsman, and this little band had it all to themselves as hounds making a circle ran fast over the grass vale crossing the road below Broomstick Hall, where Bailey came to grief, and reached Obelisk Wood checking a minute. Mr. Tresham Gilbey was the first to come up on his grey; by riding the arc of the bow hounds had travelled Mr. Sworder, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Crossman, and a few more caught them as hounds came away from the wood.

Running the brook banks for some distance hounds turned up the hill and the spinneys at Cobbin End, when a fox (Mr. Sworder thought the hunted one) showing himself for an instant tempted many of us to dwell instead of following the Master, Captain Kortright and Bailey through the wood, and there was no catching them before we reached Shatter Bushes. Galloping through or round this covert we hung a moment at the bottom just long enough to allow us to contemplate the rails, Dr. Love's selection, and see Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., gallantly fly them, and the guest of the day, the Hon. Frances Wolseley, daughter of the Commander-in-Chief, get over well after an obstinate refusal; she held a place for the rest of the run right in the van, as crossing the brook again we ran straight over Warlies

* Capt. Bruce and Mr. W. Buckmaster, two of them.

† The same, though now cut down and bare of leaf, mentioned in the Australian's run, p. 39, vol. i.—Ed.

Deer Park

Park, Mr. Jones's chestnut, a young'un I think, fencing most stickily. Into the road we had to thank Mr. Carr for crash of timber and the lead out over the high bank (Mr. A. Peel's), we had it last year; to ground it should have been to-day, as then, to put finish appropriate to this good gallop of forty-five minutes on the grass, for it was good if you were in

Tresham Gilbey

luck and saw it properly. 'Twas bad, very bad, if you didn't, and we were not surprised to hear Mr. Buckmaster say as he lit a weed that it was the third he had to keep his spirits up. But so it has and always will be with many a fox-hunting run—good, bad, or indifferent, according to the

spectacles through which you view it. Deer Park, then Nasing Coppice, where a brace came away. One fox bolted back, causing Mr. Jones to hang with his chestnut at the narrow gateway until we felt we should like to have shoved him through, as the pack were flying on after the dog fox.

Headed below Deer Park, Bailey got on him again, and hounds ran beautifully down to Milwall's Plantation and back to Shatter Bushes, and hunted slowly on to Galley Hills, where after a lot of "'ware wheat," Puckeridge, Mr. Bevan, Mr. Ball, and the majority of the field, thought it was all up; not so the huntsman, for hounds never left the line through the covert and came away the Monkham's end, the Major of course with them, the Master, Mr. A. J. Edwards, Mr. Lee, and the Admiral, and at slow pace ran to Warlies Park, and worked it back to Nasing Coppice after running one hour and a-half: Mrs. Waters, Mrs. Bennett, Miss Blyth, Messrs. G. Gold, Ball, Sworder, Tilling, Fitch, and A. J. Edwards, seeing it out. Also present during the day were Mr. and Mrs. Bowlby, Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. A. S. Bowlby, Mr. Baddeley, Mrs. F. Ball, Mr. Ford Barclay, Mr. G. Brown, Miss Blyth, Mrs. W. Buckmaster, Mr. Brindle, Mr. Victor Buxton, Mr. Pemberton-Barnes, M.F.H., Mr. Cockett, Mr. R. B. Colvin, Mr. W. Craig, Mr. Weston Crocker, Mr. W. R. Dent (and oh! such a muddy coat ere set of sun), Mr. F. Dent, Mr. J. Green, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. T. H. Harrison, Mr. Harris, Mr. G. Harris, Mr. Loyd, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Mr. H. W. Lee, Mrs. McIntosh, Miss Morgan, Mrs. Neill, Messrs. J. and E. Pelly, Mr. and Mrs. L. Pelly, Mr. Radford, Major Ricardo, Rev. R. Scott, Messrs. W. and A. Sewell, Mr. D. Cunliffe-Smith, Mr. and Miss Steele, M. H. Sworder, Mr. Tosetti, Mr. J. Todhunter.

Secretary of the Puckeridge Hounds, the moving spirit in the well-known Stansted Polo Club and Editor of BAILY'S MAGAZINE, Mr. Tresham Gilbey never finds time hang heavily upon his hands. Like his brother Guy, he is very keen indeed about hunting and polo, and is a very quick man to hounds. Precluded from riding pulling horses, owing to having dislocated both shoulders on more than one occasion, it has always been a mystery to me how he manages to play polo in the way he does, and also carry off so many prizes at polo gymkhanas, as from unfortunate personal experience polo seems to me of all games the one most calculated to cause a repetition of the accident: a remark that Mr. Miller, of Rugby fame, would probably endorse.

Rev. R. L. Scott is very fond of his chestnut mare "Joan," as well he may be. Standing 16 hands if an inch, she is a rare stamp of an Essex hunter, and though like some other members of her sex, has a touch of the devil in her, she is a rare one for her manger. Mr. C. E. Green must have been very sorry when he parted with this animal. Purchased from Darby, she carried Mr. Green's first whip (Cockayne) one season, and has carried Mr. Scott ever since. On one occasion, Mr. Scott relates, thanks to Cockayne's tuition, she made her way through a very

thick fence near Pinnacles, which neither Lord Rookwood's, Major Tait's, or Mr. Tyndale White's horses would face. We should like to see Mr. Scott out a little oftener than we do, for he makes few days and short hours.

Rev. R. Leslie Scott on "Joan"

'Twas like old days to find a leash in Sir Charles Smith's osiers at the first time of asking on Monday, February 15th. One went over the river for Tawney, another hung back, and a third went best pace to Curtis Mill Green, so that Mr. Waltham, Mr. Drummond Smith, Mr. Patchett, Q.C., Mr. Tyser, and a few more who, extra cunning, thought of securing a good start on the north bank of the stream, were left behind, and "served 'em right," for 'twas impossible to thread the narrow lane betwixt carriages and horses with be-ribboned tails in time to see hounds enter the Green. A fox out at the bottom end for the Navestock country was not pursued, and every vestige of the chase (even Mr. Tyser had taken my advice and ridden back for the Green), with the exception of a few carriages, had been swallowed up in the depths of this wild straggling covert, when, a sadder

and maybe a wiser man, I retraced my steps towards Albyns, not expecting to see hounds again until after lunch. I had played my stake and lost, and "Jenkins"—that's my other horse—was proportionately disgusted, and wouldn't stand still a second to listen to the halloa that came floating back through the mist across Albyns Park. To turn in at the lodge gate and gallop at best pace across it "Jenkins" was nothing loth, and then looming out through the mist, pressing frantically forward, the chase swept past, Mr. C. E. Ridley on his grey, in company with a well known follower of the Essex Union, being landmark enough to make for: but they were all behind, for the leaders were already gathered in the road near the Osiers, through which the huntsman was casting.

Joining the throng, trying hard to appear as if I had been with them the whole time, one learnt that they had had quite a nice spin, Mr. D. Christy,

Passingford Bridge

jun., anxiously inquiring whether I had been ill lately, as I looked so bad (so heavy about the eyes, his expression I think); but he quite understood it when the situation was explained, for a keen fox-hunter quite appreciates the sensations that you go through when hounds have disappeared—those of the angler who has lost his salmon, or the cricketer who has made his O. But his cheerful society, a trot back to the Green, and the sight of a figure, one of the most welcome in the Hunt, on a mottled horse, his first appearance at the covert side for two years, was so soothing, the crash of music, as the big dogs opened out on the drag of a fox, so exhilarating, that all traces of the late disappointment had vanished ere out through the blue mist o'er the bonnie green fields, Mr. Cockett shoving open a gate out of a lane on the west side of the covert, we sped after the big dogs which were lashing forward at best pace over as rough a line as you shall pick, search

you the country through if no more sporting one you shall find. A small band we started and a small band we kept, and if one man couldn't find a way through a rough fence another did, and to have dropped the clue for a second would have been fatal, for you could never have seen hounds two fields ahead. We had to ride at them and with them, Mr. Seymour Caldwell leading on the right, with Mr. Cockett and Mr. Lee in his tracks flipping over a stiff stile without hesitation. Mr. Harry Sworder, the huntsman, Mr. Avila, Henry John Miller, his son Jack, Mr. G. Lobb, and

William Patchett, Q.C.

Mr. Cook all in a bunch on the left, for through some fences there was only one way, and quick was the word, as turned aside for a moment by wire we dropped over the blind ditch into the lane under Stapleford Hall, swung round it and just as hearts beat high and expectation of a great run was on the point of realisation, our fox nipped through a hole in a barn wall, but for this ten minutes of the very best we were grateful. Horses were lathering freely, men were hot, and the reaction came as we rapidly cooled, while an hour was spent in vain trying to dislodge this artful dodger.

W. Patchett, Q.C., belongs to the old school—looks, in fact, as if he had stepped out of some old picture: but no keener or better sportsman, in the truest sense of the word, ever followed hounds in Essex. In his early days Mr. Patchett was a regular attendant at the meets of the Queen's Staghounds. In his later years we find him organising the 1897 Bar Point-to-Point races, with great success, in the Epping district of the Essex country.

R. C. Lyall

Mr. Lyall succeeded to the estate of his uncle, Mr. Bawtree who was well known as a keen, hard rider with the Essex Hounds up to the end of his life. Mr. Lyall now lives in that charming hunting-box which his uncle formerly occupied.

He farms a bit of his own land, and shoots most of his own rabbits; he loves hunting, but I honestly believe that he likes golf better. He can play a very pawky game at both, for given a run long enough and stiff enough, and he is as

certain to be one of the odd twenty to be found at the finish as he is to be dormy one if you take him on for a round of eighteen holes on the Epping, Harlow or Eltham Golf Links.

Few of those hunting with the Essex Hounds the last few years who have not at some time or other been partakers of Mr. Lyall's hospitality.

Solomon

They say that a roan horse with black points is generally a good one; certain it is that the roan horse here depicted, a favourite hunter of Mr. R. Cunliffe-Smith's, conformed to the rule, in spite of his having a temper of his own; for six seasons he carried his owner without mistake or refusal. He was a brilliant timber jumper, and I well recollect Mr. Cunliffe-Smith pounding the whole of the Essex field over a high gate off the green at Galley Hill on one occasion.

How we Killed the Colonel's Fox in the *Puckeridge* Country.

Few of the morning field who had met at Passingford Bridge on Monday, February 15th, and had seen a leash of foxes dispersed from Sir Charles Smith's Osiers, and a leash put out of Curtis Mill Green (one of which had given a very pretty ten minutes to Stapleford Hall), had turned homewards before we reached Colonel Lockwood's coverts about 2 p.m. The following were certainly there:—the Master, Mr. Arkwright, *sans* secretaries, Mr. Avila, Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Ball (Frank riding his new horse

for the second time), Mr. Barron, Mr. Brown (of Ditchleys), Mrs. Bennett, Mr. S. Caldwell, Miss M. and T. Buxton, Mr. W. S. Carr, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Mr. Cockett, Mr. Cook, Mr. D. Christy, jun., Major and Mrs. Carter, Mr. R. B. Colvin (Lady Gwendoline Colvin had left), Mr. A. J. Edwards, Mr. P. M. Evans, Colonel and Miss Fane, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. Arthur Green, Miss M. Green, Major Glynn, Mr. Gregory, Mr. and Miss Hollebone, Mr. W. S. Horner, Miss Jones, Captain Kortright, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. H. W. Lee, Mr. G. Lobb, Miss Morgan, Mr. H. J. Miller and his son Jack, Mrs. Neill, Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Mr. and Mrs. L. Pelly, Mr. A. Pelly, Rev. Pemberton (first appearance for two years), Major Ricardo, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mrs. Radford, Mr. A. Radford, Miss Radford,

Abridge

Mr. Roddick, Miss Owen Roberts, Mr. W. Sewell, Miss Dorothy Sewell, Mr. A. Sewell, Mr. H. Sworder ("on Pinafore)," Mr. D. Cunliffe-Smith, Mr. R. Cunliffe-Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Tyser, Mrs. Waters, Mr. J. T. White, Major and Mrs. Wilson, Mr. Waltham, Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C.

When keeper West bolted a brace from the earths in the Big Wood, one was chopped after being headed back and coursed by a sheep dog, and the other, forced best pace through the covert near Black Bush Farm, came right across our bows over the grass. Mr. Price's "Bessie" obstinately refusing the high bramble-covered bank, Mr. Waltham's lead and place found most favour. Running on at best pace, they crossed the lane through some small spinneys. Mr. Waltham out first and opening the black gate, and so past the house to the gorse below, Captain Kortright on his black dropping into the road, Bailey, Mr. Sewell and a few more riding the wheat and joining us lower down. A loop towards Mr. Randall's farm and back over the road across some very heavy land, Mr. Crossman well to the

front, hounds hunting beautifully down to Gravel Lane below Turnour's, which could not be reached without tackling Mr. Crossman's rails or the corner Mr. Caldwell found for the huntsman. Nearly every horse that followed made a blunder, as the rotten bank gave way; and so over the heavy rushy field and through Turnour's, where we had a beautiful piece of hound work as they ran the length of the long plantation beyond it and held a line through Chigwell, Mr. C. E. Green dropping into Pudding Lane with the huntsman and giving him a lead out over the high bank and deep drop on to the grass beyond, with hounds running for Roll's Park. "Left," cried Mr. Waltham, and left it was, Mr. Green coming down and blocking the way, while as we rose the hill we could spy no way through the black bullfinch until Mr. Caldwell came to the rescue on Mr. Sands' good little black, and so to the rails on Mrs. Philby's ground, Bailey trying to pull one down, Mr. Caldwell lowering two others and recovering himself well after he had discovered the outlet.

Miss Majorie Sewell on "Vanity." Miss Winifred Sewell on "Coco"

Next a glimpse of two or three hounds at the white gate near the road, a pedestrian with news of the fox just in front, the huntsman coming to the holloa and hitting it off nearly opposite the Grammar School, crossing Mr. Savill's farm and picking our way for some fifteen minutes over a very intricate country the fox was pulled down eventually after some very patient hunting in Mr. *Puckeridge's* grounds, within easy distance of Claybury, the asylum in old days for Rolls Park foxes. It was jolly riding over this old line, one which we had often ridden before barbed wire was invented, if it was sad to reflect that this large slice of the Essex country was virtually lost to us.

The huntsman presented the brush to Miss Dorothy Sewell, who, in spite of being pulled off at a high bullfinch, rode every yard of the line.

In her love for riding and hunting, the young lady who looks so much at home in this picture, on the good-looking six-year-old brown horse, "Hotspur," takes after her father and mother, whose portraits are given on pp. 398 and 401, vol. i. Although at the time this photograph was taken, in January, 1900, Miss Dorothy Sewell had not seen fifteen summers, yet she was as much at home on the back of the keen buck-jumping "Hotspur," by "Hesper," as she used to be upon the well-known polo ponies, "Vanity" and "Coco," whose portraits, with those of her younger sisters, are given upon the opposite page.

Miss Dorothy Penrose Sewell on "Hotspur"

Thanks to her father's careful tuition, Miss Dorothy Sewell can now steer her own line safely and well across any part of the Essex country. She never gets in any one's way, or attempts to ride in the huntsman's pocket.

Her young sisters bid fair to be equally good in the saddle.

The polo pony "Vanity," who carries Miss Marjorie Sewell, was one of the best known polo ponies in the West Essex Polo Club, and we believe the only West Essex polo pony that ever succeeded in winning one of the much coveted trophies at the Stansted Polo Club Gymkhana.

Mrs. Sewell has several valuable trophies she has carried off there and at other Polo Gymkhanas with "Vanity." "Coco," another of Mr. Sewell's polo ponies, s now as happy carrying Mr. Sewell's youngest daughter with harriers as he used to be in taking part in the galloping game.

J. E. Tabor

My biographical notice of Mr. Tabor is necessarily short, as he only turns up at some of the most distant meets of the Essex Hounds, and I have seen very little of him. But that little—not so very little either—has generally been the broad of his back, a beacon good enough for anyone in a splitter across the Roothings. I believe that Mr. Tabor scales more than Mr.

C. E. Green, but he rides quicker horses. How he manages to pick them up has always astonished me quite as much as the marvellous ease with which he can always maintain a lead in a quick thing across the Roothings.

Reginald Duke Hill on "Business"

This picture of "Business," by "Torpedo," dam by "Osric," a flyer from the "Quorn Countrie," who won the Fox Hunters' Plate at Harlow in 1895—photographed, as one can easily tell, by the fashionable Meltonian double-breasted swallow tail (are they warm with leathers?), in the year '96—would, if Mr. Hill's wish and mine too could have been carried out, have been excluded for a photo of his noted bay, "Dandy Dick": but unfortunately the portrait of the latter was too faded to permit of reproduction. "Dandy Dick"

had a history, and a reputation for timber. Mr. Hill, without any previous knowledge of the horse, picked him up very cheaply at Tatt's and rode him for many seasons; and in the best run he affirms he has ever had, viz., on Christmas Eve, 1887, of which an account is given in the "Essex Fox Hounds," and of which Mr. Hill possesses a memento in the

William Maitland Tower on "Bomerang"

shape of a pad, and an amusing recollection of Bailey's remark to him, that he would have a capital appetite for his Christmas pudding. Miss Bagot bought "Dandy Dick" when Mr. Hill parted with him, and her brother relates that on one occasion, after a Hunt breakfast with the Meynell, the horse carried him over six gates in succession—and *there had been no ice in the coffee.*

A good hunter, and in '96 had done first charger with the 3rd Hussars for four years, for his owner, Mr. Tower, who like his brother-in-law, Mr. R. D. Hill, is a first flighter. It is a case of in or over with him.

Upon the 10th December, '96, the day on which he very kindly took the trouble to be photographed for this book, and when he was riding, not "Boomerang," but "Yokohama," it was a case of in, for he went a plumper into the brook that runs below Bullock Wood, near Earls Colne, in the East Essex country, but in company with four others. Managing to get his horse out on the right side, as bad luck would have it, the bridle came off "Yokohama," who, galloping round the field, took the brook back by himself. Mr. Tower returning, succeeded in catching the horse, and sending him at the brook again with a will, landed handsomely over, the only one of a large field who succeeded in doing so, with the exception of Mr. R. D. Hill, who was riding his "Fancy Mare."

Arthur Capel-Cure

Arthur Capel-Cure, alas! has joined the majority, cut off in his prime. He gave up hunting when he took to the Stock Exchange. He was always very candid about his prowess in the hunting field, which is more than can be said of everyone.

He used to call himself a "Hard Funker," but all the same he made his chestnuts go the shortest way across country, and could handle a whip and wind a tandem horn as well as most men.

Thomas Courtenay Theydon Warner

Thomas Courtenay Theydon Warner is another instance of the frequency with which when a man takes to politics he gives up hunting. The House having an awkward habit of sitting during the best and greater part of the hunting season may in some measure account for this, combined with wider interests and wider pursuits and his place in a circle where something besides hunting forms the staple of conversation. Mr. Warner, however, retains his love of shooting and takes a deep interest in anything that concerns the welfare of Essex, of which he was High Sheriff in 1891. He was returned as member for North Somerset in 1892 in the Liberal interest.

In good time at the "Axe and Compasses" on a rainy morning

On Foot.

"The Axe and Compasses" on a Saturday means a full house, means a great day or a bad one, by shift of the vane. Let it point E., then saddle the best horse in your stable; shift to the west, with blue haze and a drip on the hedgerow, keep on your shooting boots. "Gone for Dobbs" as we drove up to the meet, but "are due at Lords and Leaden at midday" greeted our ears. So this accounted for the extra bustle and excitement in the yard of the "King William," as numerous second horses had been sent on there to await events. It must have been close upon one o'clock when, in company with a keeper and three or four farm hands, we took our station at a corner of Lords Wood, into which hounds had that very instant been

McAdam T. Christy A. Waters C. E. Green
En route to the "Axe and Compasses," November 21, 1896

thrown. The mist had grown denser, and the drip of it from the trees on the dead leaves beneath the only sound save for the heavy breathing of one of the men, and the occasional ring of the huntsman's cheer, that broke the dead silence, for to see a fox, a real wild fox, break cover with hounds at his brush had these men patiently waited the hour or more.

The huntsman's voice rang out clearer and more distinct—they were coming nearer, and like the rush of a salmon down stream; a single black-and-tan hound dashed full speed through the covert, and next moment a single piping note proclaimed the find, and the other hounds flew to the cry. Tally-ho back! from Easterby, and jumping leisurely out of the covert, and crossing a corner of a ploughed field, before re-entering the wood we had a capital view of a fox's cunning dodges, as hounds rather overshot the mark. However bad scent might have been out of covert, there was no want of it in, and they drove him down to the bottom end with a will, Baker's quick ear catching the return note, and with the remark, "It is the same hound leading," the fox broke view again, this time at a much

faster pace. He was being hustled, and he knew it. A minute afterwards there was dead silence, not even a smothered growl, but we knew they had got him, and the huntsman's face wore a cheerful expression, reflected in the keepers, as he said, "*That's one of 'em, Cramphorn.*" "Killed in covert," said Mr. Quare (we met him on the homeward journey—he, too, had had an indifferent day in the Forest); that's a pity, but a fox at Lords could be very well spared, though had he taken a ticket for Man Wood he might have saved his brush.

Wednesday, February 17th, Hatfield Town, was another of those days which, marked by an almost entire absence of scent, have been so common to this season of '96-'97 in all countries. It was satisfactory, very, that so many foxes were found; a splendid one going away from Row Wood, where I and "Joseph" fell in with the Hunt and learnt that in the morning, just for ten minutes, hounds had fairly raced, and that the Admiral for a few fields had had all the fun to himself. Finding a fox in the open—nay, a brace—on the plough, we finished up the day in the Forest.

Thoby Priory

CHAPTER VI.

Thoby Priory—G. Harris (Father and Son)—The Pollard Tree Fox—In Mark Hall Wood—F. T. Basham—The Quorn Cap at Thrussington—C. K. Carr—Twilight—Mrs. Wellesley Pigott—Col. Cook—Bell House—Lieut.-Col. G. W. Wood—Sequah—Varnish—Jumping Powder—Edward Ind—Church Wood, Doddinghurst—Pinafore—Kelvedon Hall Woods—Ruth Pounds the Field—Pick your own Panel—Jenkins—Kelvedon Hall—T. J. Howard—The Sky Pilot—Man Wood—Row Wood—Edward Wahab's Fantail Team—Hatfield Heath—A Day in the Forest—A Kill in the Open near Elsenham Hall—Hyde Hall Springs—Takeley Forest—Running for Down Hall—Mr. Stacey sees it out on one horse—Witney Woods—Bevan's Gorse—Coming away from Screens—The Red Ensign—Berners Wood—Damper—The Lawn meet at Greensted House—Navestock Lake—Galley Hills.

NO collection of portraits of those who have taken part in or conduced to the sport of the Essex Hounds during the last forty years would be complete without the accompanying sketch of the late Mr. G. Harris, V.S., of Sawbridgeworth, and that of his son (see page 167); the kennel horses have been their special charge for nearly half a century, and well indeed have they been looked after. It has always been well known through the Essex country that a horse that passed the Harris's was a very sound animal.

The present Mr. Harris has a wonderful knack with a horse, and I have seen him carry out some funny operations without even the aid of a twitch. He is a regular follower of the hounds, but has too much regard for the noble animal to ever override him or run the risk of breaking his back over unjump-

able places; but, all the same, he will give you a better account of a good line from Takeley Forest or a gallop in the Roothings when the last obsequies of the chase are being performed by Bailey than most of those who have bucketed their horses, as he knows every yard of the country.

George Harris

"A Bye Day in February 1897," or, How we Killed Mr. Todhunter's Pollard Tree Fox.

Our hounds had met by invitation at Finchingfield, in the Essex country, on Thursday, February 18th, and at short notice a Bye Day in the home country was arranged. The Kennels at eleven. A south-west wind, falling glass, and blue mist all against scent apparently; but you can never tell, said old Mr. Horner, as we jogged on to the meet together. Not more than twenty there, another ten putting in an appearance before the day was over: Mr. Loftus Arkwright, Mrs. Bowlby, Colonel Jeffreys, Mrs. Neill, Miss T. Buxton, Major and Mrs. Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Mr. and Mrs. F. Ball, Mrs. Waters, Mr. W. and Miss D. Sewell, Messrs. Basham, Horner, Price, Steele, A. S. Bowlby, Ford Barclay, Swire, Dr. Grubb.

Found at once in Mark Hall. Short, sharp and decisive. Mr. Ford Barclay fairly earned the brush, for he was first up when the lady pack pulled their fox down in the park within the five minutes.

For Parndon Woods next, and *en route* "the Pollard Tree," in which for years a noted old fox had taken refuge. Would he be at home? Not till the bailiff came up could they mark the spot, the single tree in the grass meadows near the farm. "There he is!" shouted Mr. Sewell, as the old grey customer came bundling down, and with only a field start of hounds and a scent on the grass he had to make tracks for it. Fences came thick and fast, two roads and a lane being crossed in point-to-point fashion (Mr. Crossman on his bay, closely followed by his wife on her wonderful pony, cutting out the work on the left) ere we struck across Harlow Common and reached Latton Covert in nine glowing minutes. All were delighted with

A Ride in Mark Hall Wood

this sparkling gallop. In Latton Park we changed, and by the time we were away from Harlow Park for a nice little hunt by Weald Coppice and Rough Talleys, Captain and Mrs. Bruce, Mr. H. J. Miller, and young Mr. Hart had joined our ranks. It was close on 3 p.m. before we reached Parndon Woods, and several, including Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Mrs. Waters, Mr. Price, Mr. Miller, had left us.

With what lightning speed a hound dashes through a covert when it first gets a view of a fox, Mrs. Bruce had ocular proof at the top end of the middle wood. Back through both and out towards Netteswell, half-a-dozen fields brought hounds to their noses at the identical Pollard Tree we had already driven a fox from in the morning; but he was on and over the plough by Fern Hills to Latton, where, finding no comrade to assist him as he ran the circuit of the covert, he slipped out at the back of the "Sun and

Whalebone," and we had to slip along on the road to catch hounds on the common. Hitting it off on the meadows beyond, they hunted prettily over the grass, no one following Mr. Arkwright over the stiff stile and footbridge into the lane, most of them preferring to chance the bank and blind ditch. Two more leps, and at the corner of Bay's Grove it was a case of facing the up jump, over the stakey fence into the plough beyond or being left behind. All our little band took it; we had still six ladies with us, Mrs. Bowlby, Mrs. Neill, Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Bruce, Miss T. Buxton and Miss D. Sewell, and some eight or nine men, including Mr. J. Green, of Parndon, who had just joined us. Hitting it off under the hedge, they turned sharp to the right, where the long furrows ran up to it, a beautiful piece of hound

George Harris, Junr.

work. Leaving Mr. Coleman's farm behind, they ran on through the Fir Plantation, and so to Passmore's and over the brook beyond, Easterby's horse having a narrow escape, as one of its hind legs went through a hole on the bridge up to its hock.

How short our fox was running only those who were there and marked how the little ladies worked out each labyrinthine twist could fully appreciate. Running by Brockles Farm, he was viewed over the road near Parndon Woods which he was too hot to enter, our informant, Mr. G. Harris, who had been with us all day, but towards the latter part of it had done a little macadamising on his own account. Beyond Fern Hills the pace began to quicken; as the fox took his last turn, he tried in vain to find refuge in the barn near the old Pollard Tree. Exactly one hour and

twenty-five minutes we had been at him, and it was one of the most patient bits of hound work I have ever seen, and one of Bailey's most brilliant successes, for hounds never ran three consecutive fields without having to puzzle it out. As the Master remarked to me, "Had there been twenty more people out, he would never have killed his fox." Mrs. Bowlby, Mrs. Neill (on her favourite cob), Miss T. Buxton, Major and Mrs. Wilson, Captain and Mrs. Bruce, Colonel Jeffreys, Mr. Basham, Mr. J. Green, Mr. J. Swire, were in at the death.

F. T. Basham

This is not the horse mentioned above, but the portrait of a good hunter taken a good many years later, when Mr. Basham was living at Hubbards Hall, within earshot of the kennels and a stone's throw of the Harlow Golf Links, of which Mr. Basham is hon. sec. Surrounded by genial neighbours and good shooting, Mr. Basham has a very good time of it, and as he knows wheat from turnips and barley from clover, and still better when hounds are running and when they are not, he never gets rated by the Master. He rarely goes home

before the hounds, and if your way is his, it will be your own fault if you or your horse go home fasting.

Saturday, the 20th, a Pleshey meet quite sustained its reputation for being the centre of some very staunch fox preserves, no less than three brace being chased on the land of the Tufnells, to the satisfaction of a Saturday field.

Monday, however, at Kelvedon must form my *pièce de résistance* for this week. Never, perhaps, has a Kelvedon meet been more numerously or more fashionably attended. On wheels, in carriages, on horseback, they gathered in shoals. 'Twould have been interesting to have known how much a guinea cap would have realised at Kelvedon Common. Somewhat more, methinks, than the paltry £7 7s. which, at the Thrussington meet of the Quorn on February 15th, marked a new era in the history of that noted Hunt.

C. K. Carr on "Twilight"

This horse, ridden by Mr. Carr, won the Roothing Plate at Harlow in '95. He is a brown gelding by "Bellerophon." "Flirt," however, on whom Mr. Carr won the Fox Hunters' Plate at Harlow in '96, was his favourite hunter. Mr. Carr is as fond of hunting as racing, and shares with his brothers the reputation of being a very straight rider across country.

May I attempt a few names, giving precedence of course to the 34 matrons and maids who, in beautifully fitting habits, graced the tryst? I must ask our gallant secretary to make a complete list ere the season wanes of the brave fair who hunt with the premier pack in Essex. They number at least 100, and 40 years ago you could have counted them on the fingers of one hand. Truly times have changed, and changed for the better, for what a charm their presence lends to the pastime of hunting; nay, not hunting, but riding through woodland scenes, and skimming o'er the pastures and intervening fences. What other sport in which the sterner sex delights lends itself to such mutual enjoyment?—shooting, fishing, cricket, football—name them not, but fall back, if you like, in fair weather on tennis or cycling.

Mrs. Wellesley Pigott on "The Saint"

To Mrs. Pigott I am indebted for the above excellent portrait of herself and her horse "The Saint," which carried her so brilliantly (for Mrs. Pigott is a finished horsewoman) with the Essex Hounds for three seasons ending 1896-97. I have to thank her also for the photograph of Pilgrim's House, near Brentwood (see p. 386, Vol. I.), where the famous Colonel

Cook, who during his Mastership of the Essex Hounds, in 1808, had his kennels, and where his huntsman lived. It was then called Bell House. There is still a bell on the roof marked with the date 1808. Since then the house has been considerably enlarged. The photograph only shows the back part, and the original kitchen used for cooking the hounds' food, the hook from which the pots hung over the big open fire-place being there till quite recently. Of the Kennels themselves but little remains, and that little is now used for a laundry and potting sheds.

Lieut-Col. G. Wilding Wood on "Sequah

This horse was purchased by the Colonel in the autumn of 1891 at Abergavenny, a well-bred horse by "Bookworm," by "Hermit." He has carried him as well as a man could wish to be carried, and for five seasons never gave him a fall. But the Colonel's favourite was "Varnish," whose portrait will be found on the next page.

Purchased in '75 from Edward Lawrence, of South Weald,

he had been badly broken down by his former owner, Mr. Gilling, hunting with the Whaddon Chase. A very resolute horse, and very fond of hounds, Colonel Wood never found the Essex Union country heavy when mounted on him, so well was he balanced. It was freezing hard on December 29, 1885, when Colonel Wood rode him for the last time with the Stag Hounds at their Thoby meet, when they ran by Willingale to Down Hall. Pulling up at White Roothing the old horse had only two sound legs, but he had gone over all the Roothing

Varnish

ditches without a mistake, as well as he did in Carnegy's two great runs, the Houndon run 1881, and the Rook Wood run 26th February, 1881.

Col. Wood recalls a very amusing episode at Bishop's Hall, in General Mark Wood's time. 'Twas in the afternoon, and while the coverts were being drawn, refreshments were handed round, sherry, &c. At length one of the refreshed

discovered that his sherry was *brandy*, which had been going the round; not a soul had mentioned it. Suddenly there was a holloa. The Colonel never saw such a stampede before. Everyone took the first horse he could lay his hands on, and for ten or fifteen minutes he never saw men ride so hard. Mr. Ind and the Colonel had a hearty laugh over it on their way home.

Edward Ind

To anyone who shall peruse Mr. Vickerman's narrative it will be evident that Mr. Ind was a great enthusiast. Of a cheery, genial presence, with a kind smile and ready greeting for the rising generation, he was much missed when he ceased to come out. The last time I can recall him was during a run that took us past Coombe Lodge; he stood at his lodge gates and waved hounds on to the line which they had momentarily lost.

To proceed: Mrs. Waters, Mrs. Ball, Mrs. Heseltine, Mrs. Upton, Mrs. Fraser-Tytler, Mrs. Crossman, Mrs. Tyser, Mrs. Fane, Mrs. Blyth, Mrs. Mackintosh, Mrs. Radford, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Pigott, Mrs. R. Cunliffe-Smith, Mrs. Fulcher, Mrs. Neill, Miss Jones, Miss Johnson, Miss Garden, Misses Usborne (2), Misses Walmsley (2), Miss Buxton, Miss Woodhouse, Misses Brown (2), Misses Morgan (2), Miss Hollebone, Miss M. Green, Miss Ind, Miss Fane, and a young lady in a brown covert coat.

Mr. Bevan in charge, in the absence of both Masters, quite equal to the task, and doing it very well (securing the huntsman, especially in the early part of the day, when he held his field in the lane near Waterworks Wood, ample room and liberal law), Mr. Tyndale-White, Mr. Avila, Mr. E. Ball,

Church Wood, Doddinghurst

Mr. Ford Barclay, Mr. Baddeley, Messrs. Carr (2), Mr. D. Christy, jun., Mr. Cook, Mr. Craig, Mr. D. Crossman, Mr. Capel-Cure, Mr. Dalton, Mr. A. J. Edwards, Col. Fane, Major Glynn, Mr. Gregory, Mr. E. Helme, Capt. Kortright, Mr. Hull and son, Messrs. Lobb (2), Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Mr. Miles (Beacon Hill), Mr. H. J. Miller, Mr. Marriage, jun. (Horsefrith Park), Mr. Patchett, Rev. Pemberton, Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. J. Pelly, Mr. L. Pelly, Mr. Radford, Major Ricardo, Mr. Raby, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Capt. Tufnell, Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. Sargeaunt, Mr. Single, Mr. A. J. Tweed, Mr. T. Usborne, M.P., his son, the future M.P., Mr. J. T. White, Mr. Waltham, Col. Wood, General Sir E. Wood, V.C., and many more, including the smartest man I have seen with hounds this season, if the neatest of tops and most immaculate of coats and glossiest of hats count for anything.

Monday was a hard day for horses and hounds. It could not have been otherwise, for from 11.30 to 3.30 they were on the move over land that

will require the drying wind of March ere it is fit for tillage, and in an atmosphere as soft and warm as a day in June. With a little luck we might have had a great day, for up wind there was a scent, but the foxes had it in the changes they secured as they threaded the numerous coverts. At the same time no one went home discontented, everyone seemed cheerful and gay, and where men's voices are heard in morning trains it was voted "good."

It would be quite impossible for me to describe the interesting route by which we reached Blackmore High Woods, with their open earths, from Church Wood, Doddinghurst. If I can readily picture the clever way Mr. Tyndale White's roan walked down the ditch side and hopped the plank at the bottom, and recall how much I maligned Mr. Hull in

Church Wood, Doddinghurst, from the road

supposing that there was a yard of wire within a mile of Jericho. Near this Mr. Sworder (on the chestnut thoroughbred "Pinafore," own sister to "Midshipmite") gave a specimen of his horsemanship as he landed her over first the rails, then the bank, and after clearing the wide ditch into the road would have no denial, as he took her straight out of it, up a bank like the side of a house: Captain Kortright jumped at the same time, and Miss Jones recalled a narrow escape from charging the wire netting over which the huntsman had led.

To those who were not with hounds we appeared to have travelled fast over a good line of country. Mr. Edwards was one, having, unluckily, had a nasty fall at the second fence, smashing his glasses and hurting his neck: also he got up so completely encased in mud that Mr. Avila, who stayed behind to render assistance, had to have recourse to a handy pond to make him presentable.

1.30 p.m. found us all *en route* for the Kelvedon Hall country, with a certainty of a find in the coverts of that good sportsman and excellent friend to hunting, Mr. Jones. Not one, but a brace; and while Bailey and the majority of the pack were going away towards Bois Hall with the old customer, Mr. Waltham was away to the Menagerie after another, with three couple of hounds, and Mr. Usborne, M.P., shortly afterwards asking him, "where's Bailey?"

Yes, where's Bailey? That's the question I wanted to know, as having just changed "Jenkins" for "Joseph," I heard the distant halloa! and caught the sound of hounds full cry over the rise of the ground beyond Beacon Hill. Full cry up the slope the leaders were already rising the crest, Sir

Kelvedon Hall Woods

Evelyn in the van, and my friend on the mottled horse, hat in hand, screaming himself hoarse as he cheered them on to the line. Through the chain of woods what better hunting could you have had? Were they going? Were they chiming along as they crossed the road? You would have said so if you had been on the spot to see the huntsman charge, but charge in vain, at the bank out of it with rails on top, and Mr. Avila, on the famous "Gaynes Park," trying, like the ostrich, to hide his head in the bank; while coolly, quietly, deftly handling her black thoroughbred, Mrs. Crossman shot out from the gaping throng, and amid the scarce concealed plaudits of the onlookers topped it most beautifully, just touching the bank, and then hopping the rails. In the meantime Mr. Crossman was busy with a chained gate, and I was being urged a little further on to hurry up at a drop fence, over which two or three had flown some unnecessary yards; but the apology came at once, "I ought

to have taken my own place ; " and so Lindsay Gordon says, " Let every man pick his own panel," and if you follow another you must allow him to get over the fence in his own way, nor rush it till he is clear. Shortly after, in attempting another bank into a road, which no one else would look at, Mrs. Crossman's black came down. Changing at a gorse covert, we ran back at a great pace to Church Wood, and had to circle it at the gallop as hounds went away, which afforded me the opportunity of forgiving " Jenkins " for dropping his hind legs in the morning at a certain fence on the right of the covert, which, in the afternoon journey, brought Mr. Christy and Mr. J. T. White down at the same time.

Kelvedon Hall

At 3.30 Bailey might have been seen exploring an empty house in search of his fox. Six different opinions might have been learnt at the same time and place as to his exact whereabouts, and if by then you hadn't developed a thirst which only a whisky and soda, or a beaker of sparkling (I nearly said lager) would adequately quench, you must have been made of more ethereal matter than the three mortals who, at Mr. Miles', of Beacon Hill, stayed to quaff the sparkling nectar.

Mr. Howard, who lives at Matching Hall, and commenced hunting with the Essex Hounds in 1877, farms a large number of acres in the very centre of our best fox preserves. Until deprived of the use of one of his arms through a gun accident in 1893, he was known as one of the best horsemen (in the way of riding any sort of horse) in our country, for he had splendid hands, and being able to make a horse take off at the right place, rarely came down. He gets across country now in

a marvellous manner, and can beat half of those who come out, who, if they have two hands to Mr. Howard's one, have not got Mr. Howard's head-piece. That he is a staunch preserver of foxes and good all-round sportsman goes without saying.

SHROVE TUESDAY.

And missed the pancakes; really after a hard day's hunting you would require the effrontery of an ostrich to face them.

Shrove Tuesday's sport might have been worse, a great deal worse; might have been better, decidedly better.

We had to thank the bright sun and warm morning for liberal law at "Little Laver Mill;" otherwise, Mr. Radford, you and your son would not have been the only late arrivals.

T. J. Howard

Did we find at Brick Kilns? No.

Did we find at Man Wood? Yes.

Go up top, Master Radford, and keep there until I ask you the next question.

Did you get away from Man Wood when they did find? Not the first time; that's nothing, everyone did, even "the Captin." But when they slipped out on the Brick Kiln side, with the Ongar Brigade at their heels? No.

I thought not. Go down bottom, Master Arthur, of "Smalley Hall," Co. Derby, and make room for your betters, for there were only five who did the trick, Mr. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Mr. G. H. Lee, and the huntsman, and for the brief, fierce, hot scurry to the stick heaps at Matching Green, they were the guiding stars that enabled a scattered and bewildered crowd to overtake hounds again. 'Faith! had they run to High Laver, Moreton, and Blake Hall at the same pace we should have commenced keeping Lent a day too soon. That reminds me of a good answer of the General's to a Sky pilot on the day in question. "Not hunting in Lent, my dear sir? Hire a bad horse that can't go a little bit, and come out regularly. What better penance could you have?" Quite right, but he would have to be a very bad 'un if the General could not extract some fun out of him.

Man Wood

But I must take you back to the Fagot Sticks, where, if you were wise, you ate your sandwiches. If you were truthful, you would have answered like Mr. Howard, of Matching Hall, when asked if he got away with them. Yes. At least, they were somewhere about here when I left Man Wood.

Now, when that fox did come away from the stick heap—or, rather, with a strict regard for veracity, when that stick heap came away from the fox, for bundle by bundle it was pitchforked aside—he was foolish enough to swim a pond, emerging like a drowned rat. I gave him three fields, but in three fields he had brought hounds to their noses, and in as many more had spreadeagled the field as he circled round below Brick Kilns, returning to Man Wood up the sandy lane. Sandy! The mud and water was flying about as we splashed our way through in a fashion that I have never seen equalled in all the years I have ridden this desperate ride. The Hunt

ought to clear all the mud off, lay a good foundation of clinkers and ashes, having well drained it, then returf or clear-sand the floor.

Bow-wow through the first wood. Hounds hung in the second until, in answer to a ploughman's signal, the huntsman laid the pack on in Chaffey's meadow. Mr. Collin was with us to-day, but not in mood Cedrician, nor would anyone take up the gauntlet, or go within 200 yards of the spot where he threw it down in his Curtian leap in the great evening run from Hatfield town. What all the young bloods were up to, missing so fair a chance of wiping out their defeat, puzzles me, for hounds went straight down the long mead, straight over the yawning gulf—not a soul followed, but ignominiously they turned away and sheered off for the Farm on the left, two fields away from hounds.

Row Wood

From the road to Row Wood no one complained of the pace; Mr. Swire, Capt. Bruce, and Mr. C. E. Ridley were going very strong on the left, particularly Mr. Swire, who was jumping everything as it came, nor stayed to open a single gate for anyone by Row Wood side. Nor would the General allow the last one to be swung aside until he had his leap. The lady who was close behind him, and who had been going most brilliantly in this burst, had followed his lead ere the "open sesame," the coppers we always carry, had been fished out of the waistcoat pocket, and we walked through in safety, and in a few minutes saw the stick-heap fox handsomely rolled over in a grass field close to the covert. Two dear little girls with fair golden hair were up at the finish, but all the same I should have fastened the brush to the bridle of Georgie Dawson's grey had I been Master. Never have I seen him look more cheerful and gay, with face like

a full moon and as rosy as the setting sun. He had enjoyed this hunt as much as anyone across the playing grounds of his youth, and seen it better than most. It really was a nice little burst, and "Joseph" pleased me immensely.

Back now to Down Hall, Matching Park, and ne'er a fox until a chorus of halloas beyond Heathen Wood set the machinery in motion. Up went the hounds' heads, and wrong went the majority of the thrusters, and all the Baileyites who forded the brook as the fox recrossed it; and with hounds at his brush, and half-a-dozen people with hounds, including Mrs. W. Buckmaster, Mr. Gerald Buxton and his Reverence, he was run into the Moor Hall coverts. Mr. Arkwright—determined to have sport and to give Mr. Chaffey Collin another chance on his third horse—pushed on to Barnsley's without avail, and the hollow tree was of no use to Mr. Harrison, who, after a rattling good run with the stag, had jumped on his hack just to see what we were doing. Never have I known the springs in "Jenkins'" hind legs so non-elastic, for that extra four stone on his back made all the difference in the hack home.

Edward Wahab's Fantail Team

Tandem or unicorn, it matters not which, Mr. Wahab handles the ribbons with a master's hand, and his familiar figure is rarely absent from a good polo match or favourite meet. Debarred by an accident from taking that vigorous part in the pursuit of the fox, to which his heart prompts him, he manages to extract a good deal of pleasure from driving all sorts in the frequent driving tours which he takes through the beautiful wooded scenery of England; a pleasure which is greatly enhanced by the society of his wife, who generally accompanies him on his holiday excursions.

Hatfield Heath

A Day in the Forest.

And a right good one to boot (Wednesday, February 24th). The meet Hatfield Heath. The field by no means a large one, but of the right quality. Several caps besides Mr. Stacey's. Several ladies besides Mrs. Bowlby and Mrs. Arkwright, Mrs. W. Buckmaster and Mrs. Crossman. 'Twas so long since I had had a day in the forest that it seemed almost *terra incognita*. We must have travelled fairly well, after breaking in the direction of Canfield Hart, to have killed our fox in thirty-three minutes, fairly in the open too, in the green fields beyond Elsenham Hall, the last four at steeplechase pace, Bailey delighted at having scored one point in the return rubber.* Mr. Harrison seemed very much at home in this

Hyde Hall Springs

country, but lost a lot of time with Mr. Crossman at some iron railings. (Mr. C. was riding a new one from the Meynell country.) Mr. Weston Crocker was going very strong, and Mr. Jones on his young chestnut was all there, as also was Captain Cairns as he walked about at the bottom of the first ditch we had to negotiate when we came away from the forest. "Peter" wanted to jump the lot.

Another spin from Bassingbourne of short duration, and a capital gallop afterwards with a fox I viewed for them from the forest. Running out into the Puckeridge country very smartly at starting, Mr. Tyndale White and Mr. Buckmaster settled down in the front directly the galloping began. Headed back, hounds ran very fast over the park, scattering the deer and

* The Puckeridge on their last visit (February 9th) to the neutral Takeley coverts killed two foxes in the Essex country after splendid runs.

Takeley Forest

swimming the lake and, disappearing through the wire fencing, gave the huntsman and most of us a stern chase ere we caught them half-way to Barrington Park. Jim Cockayne (huntsman to the Puckeridge) padded him up the lane, and they ran on to the hollow tree in the park from which neither smoke nor the gymnastic efforts of Jack, Mr. Buckmaster and one or two more could dislodge him. Nearly all but the two horsemen now went home, missing quite the run of the day with a *rare-bit*,* and of those who were left, including Mr. G. Harris and Mr. Crossman, a good many thought that hounds would nail the *rare-bit* in covert. Not so, however, for crossing the heath road, they struck the good scenting ground

Running for Down Hall

that lies beyond and ran very fast towards Down Hall. Mr. Buckmaster on "Success," riding as I like to see a man ride, parallel with the leading hounds and half a field wide of them taking his own line, and not sneaking along after Bailey. Checking for half a minute above Lancaster Springs, they crossed the brook and ran straight for Hatfield Grange. Where, oh! where was Mr. Crocker? Bang across his straw ring and out over the road. Mr. A. Bowlby coming to grief near here, they pushed their fox along for Row Wood without touching it, losing him a mile or so beyond White Roothing at 5 p.m., only ten being up at the finish—viz., Mr. Arkwright, Mr. and Mrs. W. Buckmaster, Mr. A. S. Bowlby, Mr. Basham, Mr. Rupert Blyth (right to the front on Mr. Arkwright's old grey), Mr. Gosling (hung up at last fence, but kicked himself clear), Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. Stacey, who went like a workman, riding one horse all day (a well-bred little

* Bailey had finished drawing the Springs when a single hound spoke. Someone said, "Rabbit."

chestnut), never in a hurry, but turning with hounds and without pressing them, always with them; and Mr. Todhunter, just back from New Zealand with its stiff timber fences, and making a recent purchase from Aldridge's into quite a clever hunter, as it had not forgotten its four falls the first day he rode him. He seemed to fancy "Norton," the New Zealand horse, which he had known from a yearling for the G.N.

There is nothing easier in the world than to make copy out of a day's hunting. I don't say readable copy, but copy of some sort. Even if the sport be "nil," or of the most moderate character, whatever hunting correspondents may affirm to the contrary, or reiterate that without straw bricks cannot be made. But if the day is "a good one," then the hunting scribe has only to protect himself against the exuberance of his own ver-

Witney Woods

bosity, and with standing martingale or Ransom bit or "Bucephalus" noseband, take care that his quill doesn't run away with him. Perhaps, however, the printer's joy, the editor's ideal and reader's patience is best consulted when medium sport takes place, and medium sport forms the burden of my song, if you would have me sing of last Saturday's play, when we met at Fyfield on March 6th.

To start with, when large flakes of snow, driven before a N.W. breeze, commenced falling shortly after the breakfast hour, with rising glass and forecast favourable, we had strong hopes of a great day, and although Mr. Quare's noted harriers were to meet close at hand in a grand country, we would not have missed the chance of trying to see it for a king's ransom. Our views were confirmed on arriving at the meet, when Mr. Seymour Caldwell, in the neatest of grey suits and gaudiest of ties, rode up on a bike

and said, "A rare day for hunting, this." How we should like to have seen him on some other hack. At Fyfield we heard that Mr. C. E. Green had met with an accident when hunting with the Bicester that would keep him, it was feared, out of the saddle for some time. Bad luck, this, at the end of the season. Also that Major Carter, thanks to a friend who had broken his collar-bone, had dropped in for the loan of fifteen hunters in a good grass country. We fancy the Major will enjoy himself, and the horses too, for they will be ridden straight and ridden fairly. Unfortunate that "Spitfire" was *hors de combat*, and Mrs. Carter reduced to wheels.

Saturday would not have been uneventful had we nothing further to record than that Mr. R. Y. Bevan's new gorse at Willingale (there was a good deal of barley about it) was drawn for the first time. That it lies quiet and is well looked after, the hare jumping up proved. Pity that the

Coming away from Screens

hounds ate her, Mr. Quare! and that Mr. Percy Whitaker, Master of the Essex and Suffolk, should have witnessed such riot. Previous to this we had drawn Witney Wood without finding—a very common occurrence, for I believe I am right in stating that not a single fox has been found in the Forest Hall coverts this season, and I had received practical proof and demonstration of what red ribbon means in a horse's tail, as through stirrup leather and boot the shoe left its mark. But the same animal had a much better innings with a friend of mine a few days previously, for, having fairly pinned him in a corner, he had him on the leg three times before he would let him out, and for some time so benumbed with pain was the limb that my friend hardly knew whether it belonged to him or the doctor.

Now there is red ribbon and red ribbon, and to the majority of those who hunt it means "Kick if you touch me." That's all right, but when

for pure fun and general light-heartedness an animal turns itself sideways to make sure of the mark, it ought at least to carry the red, white and blue. Personally I feel convinced that, although the ribbon is neat, and may be fashionable, the card in the hat is far more easily seen, and when one sports the red and another wears the card, you are apt, while looking for the one, to receive a reminder of the other, all of which remarks go to show that it is easy to write about what you feel. But perhaps I have no right to say a word or hazard an opinion, since my friends all remind me the roan mare always carried the red ensign (the first, I think, in Essex).

N.B.—She never kicked anyone, as luck would have it.

I spent a *mauvais quart d'heure* shortly after Mr. Bevan's hare had been slain and eaten, trotting along the road between Spain's Wood, Willingale,

Berners Wood

and the Witney covert, for the hounds had slipped the majority of the field—not all, as I had at first imagined, for as we clustered in the narrow lane under the covert, and the first roar of hound music had subsided, "Hare again" was freely ejaculated. Minute by minute went by, and only those who were far back on the road had any notion that hounds were away with a fox; but the five minutes' start he had of them he made good use of, and saved his brush in Witney Wood. Mr. Harry Sworder was one of the lucky ones who got away, Mr. H. E. Jones and Mr. Giles two more. How "Joseph" pulled down that road, and with what a dash "Dan Gingell" came flying down it, only a pen of a Rusticus could do adequate justice to.

The scene now shifts to the muddy lane *en route* to Screens. As to avoid it, Mr. Newman Gilbey put his horse at a bank covered with stakes, the horse slipping, was soon struggling in the middle of them, but marvellous to note, came off without a scratch, as having landed his rider in the field, he came back into the lane.

In Screens a brace; most of us away with a good start, Mr. C. E. Ridley opening the gate into the road near the Park; young Mr. White hopping over the rail, and hounds swinging away to the right and parallel with the road. Everyone mad keen to be with them. Back at speed towards Screens, leaving it on the right. So to the lane below it, "the captain" opening the gate, the Master flicking in and out of the lane at the same moment, hounds swinging under the next fence right across our front, Mr. Whitaker sending Mr. Edwards's chestnut at the stiff fence out of the plough in his own line. A merry hunt through Berners Wood—Mr. Sworder on "Pinafore" leading on the left, Miss M. Morgan smashing the stile as she followed Mr. Waters through the covert, the "General" hopping over another as they came away from it; Mr. Docwra landing over the gate (not yours, Mr. P. Gold, that came later on) into the road, Mr. J. Marriage and Mr. P. M. Evans hacking quietly down it, hounds crossing the same below Garnish, and running fast over the plough, Mr. Jones on "The Colonel" taking the lead directly the band began to play, and keeping it to the stack yard at Good Easter, where the gallop came to an end—is all I can present to you from my point of view. The hour, nigh 3 p.m., one-horse men mostly going home, missing nothing much thereby beyond a pretty bit of hunting, thanks to "Damper," who must have had cold: I never heard such a note. Slow, but fast enough for the occasion, from High Roothing to Canfield Hart, Mr. Sam Fitch taking a bath *en route*, having just volunteered that the grey had never yet grassed him, whatever he might have done to his son. Few left at the finish, and only two ladies, Mrs. Buckmaster and Mrs. Bruce. Fifteen miles home for some of us, and the stars well out and the moon well up ere we won it.

THE LAWN MEET AT GREENSTED HOUSE.

on Monday (March 8th, '97) was very fashionably attended, and was marked by a day's sport far above the average.

It was a happy thought of Mr. and Mrs. Crossman's inviting the non-hunting as well as hunting farmers to share in the hospitalities, which were freely accepted by all the hunting fraternity who gathered at this pretty spot: honoured for the first time in the annals of the Essex Hunt with a lawn meet. "The Millbanks," Mr. Mumford, Mr. G. Hart, Mr. Christy, Mr. J. Green, Mr. Dunlop, Mr. Avila, Mr. Waltham. Both Masters and their wives, both Secretaries, the Hunt was well represented. Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Buxton, Mr. A. S. Bowlby, Captain and Mrs. Bruce, Mr. Barron, Mr. F. Ball, Mr. Carr, Mr. R. B. Colvin, Mr. Cowee, Mr. A. J. Edwards, Mr. Giles, Mr. Loyd, Mrs. McIntosh, Miss Morgan, Mrs. Neill, Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. A. Radford, Major Ricardo, Mr. J. Sands, Mr. D. Cunliffe-Smith, Mr. J. Swire, Mrs. Waters, Mr. J. Tyndale White, Major Wilson, General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C.; on wheels Mr. and Mrs. Jump.

It was simply a perfect day for hunting, bright, and with breeze scarce sufficient to turn the vane to the east.

In Kettlebury Springs Mr. Christy had a fox for us, and a lawn kill followed a lawn meet, for they nailed him in Ongar Town in Mr. C. Smith's garden at Land View House, only one maid out of three making a bolt of it when the worry took place. By Stanford Hall brook side and over Mr. Crossman's shooting preserves we reached Ongar Park, and in the heart of the covert found at once. There was a great scent, and the bitches drove their fox from end to end, forced him out in the open towards "the Fiddlers," and brought him back across the Park with a swing and up to the Gravel Pits. Hounds hovered for a second near the line, and then tore away across the meadows for Rough Talleys. Both gates locked, and no outlet

until the Master made one through the hairy fence, by which time hounds had secured such a lead that neither he nor any of his following caught them until they checked at the extreme end of Ongar Park; Mr. Price, Mr. Hilliard, and one other who had turned back at once for the butts, being the only three with them as they raced back through the woods as if glued to their fox.

Hesitating on the railway line until some of us were almost lost, we galloped down the Weald Road on the chance of hounds coming out on the Harlow side, the Secretary* on his grey and a man on a bay making rare play down it.

"Had you judg'd of these two by the trim of their pace,
At Bib'ry you'd thought they'd been riding a race."

Navestock Lake

But this saved their bacon, for they only just gained the outskirts of the Great Woods as hounds came away on the grass, and then followed the best part of the run, for from here to Knightsland hounds simply flew. There was little time to note anything. I could see Captain Bruce on his favourite horse "Tinker" slapping along after hounds which were well over the brook before he and the huntsman got to it. Caught a jovial smile on Mr. Loyd's face as he lep'd out of the Toot Hill Road with hounds, heard Mr. Waltham holloaing at me to come into the lane and save the brook, and shortly afterwards found myself exploring it and coming out the right side, hounds tearing up the meadows beyond, and crossing Mr. Waltham's lane, up which Mr. Sands and Colonel Fane were as quick as anyone. At slower pace they ran the plough to Sir Charles Smith's woods, and hung a moment beyond Berwick Wood. "That's it," said Mr. R. B. Colvin, as

* Mr. R. Y. Bevan.

The Meet at Greensted House

half-a-dozen hounds feathered on the line, and away they swung again over the grass by Mr. Freeman's, and down to the river and to its brinks rode the huntsman and nearly all the field; Mr. Bevan, Mrs. Bowlby, Mrs. G. Buxton, General Wood, Mr. Avila, Mr. Barron, and half-a-dozen more going for the ford on the left, and catching hounds in the Navestock plantation.

Beautifully, without any assistance, hounds took it through and up to the lake, and ran its margin down the big pasture, where Mr. Tyndale White joined us, and in the road near Navestock Hall the huntsman and his following, who had had a stern chase round by Shonks Mill, got up to hounds; running behind Mr. Steill's house, they crossed the road and raced away for Navestock, slipping nearly all the field, but coming back bang through the middle of them towards Dudbrook, where this good run of one hour and thirty minutes (fifty of it in the open) practically came to an end. How well Mrs. Bowlby, Mrs. Arkwright, Mrs. Buxton and Mrs. Crossman (who was riding Mr. Giles's pony) went through this run, all those who were up at the finish will bear me witness.

Galley Hills

Galley Hills.

Quite one of the jolliest days I ever remember was Wednesday, March 10th, from these noted coverts of that staunch preserver of foxes and ex-master of hounds, Mr. R. Beale Colvin, and so said a great many more who are fond of hunting (hound work), galloping and jumping, and, 'faith, before sun had set they had had their fill. The pity of it, hounds did not kill, but the *Galley Hill Foxes* take as much killing as the Parndon veterans (for one of which I once offered £1 to the huntsman if he could handle within a certain period). I now renew this offer for a *Galley Hill*

Fox (must be a dog), killed fair and square in the open (any time) or in the woods after not less than one hour's chase; no lifting in either case, and before the end of the present season.

"Can't stand Galley Hills," round and round I heard (not sorrowfully, oh! dear no) from more than one follower of our hounds previous to this meet, so the muster at Epping Green was smaller than usual, but included a good sprinkling of ladies (though we missed Mrs. Bowlby), Mrs. Arkwright, Lady Gwendoline Colvin, Mrs. Gerald Buxton, Miss Buxtons (2), Mrs. F. Ball, Miss M. Green, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Crossman, Mrs. Waters, Miss D. Sewell, Miss Pelly. The men were more numerous—will it be so in ten years' time? The Master, Mr. Arkwright, Secretary, Mr. Tyndale White, Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., and his son, Admiral Hastings, Mr. Avila, Mr. F. Ball, Mr. G. Buxton, Mr. R. B. Colvin, Mr. D. Crossman, Mr. Cook, Mr. A. J. Edwards, Mr. N. Gilbey, Mr. J. Green and son, Mr. W. S. Horner, Mr. H. E. Jones, Mr. G. H. Lee, Messrs. E. and J. Pelly, Mr. A. Peel, Mr. Harris, Major Ricardo, Mr. H. Sworder, and his cousin on "Jenkins," Messrs. W. and A. Sewell, Mr. J. T. White, Mr. Tosetti, Mr. Simonds.

A. C. Balloch on "Cockie"

This horse, formerly the property of Mrs. Arkwright, and known by the name of "Snowstorm," carried Mr. and Mrs. Balloch for five seasons with the Essex Hounds. Needless to add that he carried them to the front; for the horse not only knew his business, but the riders theirs; Mrs. Balloch, who was more often seen on the horse than her husband, being a particularly fine horsewoman.

We have no more trying country within the boundaries of our Hunt in a wet season than the Galley Hill environs. The grass rides infinitely

worse than the plough, and without you possess a horse of great stamina and exceptional soundness, you can never see a day through properly. I have known more horses cooked and lamed in this neighbourhood than any other. Not only is the going heavy, but the hills are steep, the rides deep, and the fences many of them stiff drops—the very ones to try the back sinews and lame a valuable horse. I write from experience. "Therefore avoid Galley Hills when the water fills every hoof mark and swishes up from every headland," and if you can discover a boot impervious to the moisture of Galley Hills, take out a patent and your fortune is made.

Richard Francis Ball

Richard Francis Ball will be known to posterity as the joint author, with Mr. Tresham Gilbey, of "The History of the Essex Foxhounds." He is known to those who follow the fortunes of that pack as a very keen rider, and very fond of a horse that can gallop. He is very fortunate in possessing a wife as fond of hunting as himself, thus doubling the joy he extracts from the game.

Mrs. R. F. Ball is one of those charming ladies whom hunting men welcome in their midst, for keen as she is, she is

always ready to accept a lead, never gets in the way, and the only man I have heard of who ever lost a run through her —"'twas in the Dagnam Country"—was Richard Francis himself, who at that time would have lost twenty runs if he could have been of any assistance to one who was to become his partner for life. Needless to say that no happier couple ever come out with the Essex; each take their own line, but Mrs. Frank generally has two days to her husband's one.

Mrs R. F. Ball "Griggs"

A falling glass, rather a strong flashy breeze from the S.W., and a bright sun hardly seemed favourable for a scent, so I very nearly reserved "Joseph" for Saturday. 'Twas lucky I didn't, as the sequel will show. In Deer Park a real traveller was away at the north-east corner almost before hounds were in covert, and for fifteen minutes streaked away at a pace that I have never seen beaten. Past Harolds Farm they were round and tearing over the grass meadows for the Coppice ere half the field had emerged through the muddy cow-yard. Nothing like riding the crest of the hill when hounds are running for the Coppice, but 'tis imperative, if

you would arrive there with them, not to part company with your horse, Mr. Rickett, but you asked a big question, even of one that boasts a "Pedometer" for a sire, when you sent her at that thick bullfinch after Mr. Jones and several more had indicated the gap. The mare can gallop, for she reached the Coppice as soon as anyone. Mr. Arkwright, on "Catapult," with a clear lead of those who had ridden the slope of the fields with hounds, came striding up to the narrow handgate, closely followed by the huntsman, and without dwelling a second, threaded their way through the bushes by Nasing Coppice, and struck the dip of the green-lane beyond as Jack's scream of "Awa-a-y" was heard! How the deuce did he get there? But Jack knows a thing or two, and glad we were to see him back in the saddle again, and back in the place into which he always drops when a travelling fox is in front of hounds with a burning scent.

What a race there was for that sound headland that runs the whole length of the Common, dipping up and down in gentle undulations like the billowy swell on the broad Atlantic as, 300 yards below us over the ant hills packed in a wedge like a flight of duck, the pack skimmed over this good scenting ground at such a pace that no horse that has yet been foaled could have lived in their wake for three miles. The Master was riding a good one in "Catapult," the huntsman was on a clipper, Mr. Avila steering a mare that can go, Mr. Jones astride the galloping "Princess," and yet, although the hounds covered a lot more ground, they had the best of the race until the fencing began. The leaders, the names I have given, with the addition of Mr. Arkwright, Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, reached the Parndon Road with hounds, and jumped out of it two abreast, and in much the same order galloped the woodland inside the wire that runs past the first wood, and caught a glimpse of black and white as hounds flashed into the second, and, as luck would have it, changed foxes in the third, coming to a check at the bottom end towards Netteswell. 'Twas a grand burst, and if there was little fencing there was a narrow escape to record, as, taking the boundary fence of the Common on to Mr. Ralph Palmer's land, that veteran, Mr. Archibald Peel, who never turns aside for anything, went crashing through it, carrying its murderous coils round his horse's legs into the field beyond, and emerging, *mirabile dictu*, unscathed—the second time on this same estate that he has had such a narrow escape. The pace was too good for any but the best horses. I always fancied that "Joseph" could gallop. I know that he can stay; but at the end of the Common Mrs. Crossman, on her pony, shot past "Joe" as if he was standing still. The pony ought to be called "The Little Wonder," and should be worth 300 guineas for polo.

The cry of hounds had driven a leash of foxes from the Parndon strongholds, so over Nasing Common for Galley Hills we wended our way, turning up the muddy lane just beyond the Toll Gates, which is one of the deepest morasses it has ever been my misfortune to flounder through, and belongs, I believe, to the Corporation of London, by whom it was purchased for the delectation of the citizens of London Town. It soon bids fair to become impassable. With Jack's "Tally ho! back," at the Monkhams end of Galley Hills, of the fox Mr. Crossman had just previously viewed over the ride, and which hounds simply could not own, came a vigorous "Gone away" over the Monkhams Lane, proclaiming the flight of another, and after him went Bailey with lightning speed. In and out of the lane, Mr. Jones nearly knocking the Hon. Secretary over, and "Joseph" taking all advantage of the collision, another fence, and the water was flying like the spray from the bows of an Atlantic liner as the field galloped up the lane for Monkhams, Mr. Sworder on the left of it, hounds swinging

to him at the top of the hill, Mrs. Bennett hesitating for a second to jump out, Mrs. Ball well up, and the Master taking a bank with some awful rabbit holes in it, and a big drop—"Joseph" followed him—ere hounds turned again towards Monkhams, and two lines were indicated, one up the park, and the other towards Warlies. Too late the huntsman clapped forward at the gallop on the last one over a good line of country, but beyond Obelisk Wood nothing came of it—except the fun at the brook, Miss M. Buxton's chestnut not being the only horse that nearly came down.

"Evolution"

"Evolution," the property of Mr. Alfred Poole, of Chelmsford, winner of many prizes in the show ring at Waltham Abbey, Harlow, Woodbridge, and Colchester.

Again to Galley Hills, and this time for a change, and to mark the uncertainty of a fox's line, hounds came away without their huntsman. Leaving Deer Park on the left, they ran beautifully over the big pastures for Shatter Bushes, Mr. Tyndale White taking a nasty toss over some timber as they rounded the cover, and without dwelling a second, went slap through it, crossed the gravel lane (the fox only a field in front of hounds), and over the holding pastures, where many being reduced to a trot unfortunately missed one of the prettiest parts of the run, for there was no chance whatever of making up any lost ground at the pace hounds were going. Just touching the further corner of Deer Park, they were away over Galley Hill Green, and with a piping hot scent were flinging over the big pastures beyond as fast as we could get to them, the youngest of the Hunt staff boldly making a hole in the done-up fence into the lane, the Admiral further simplifying it, and "Catapult" not touching a stick.

'Twas bad luck that our fox was headed, from the good line he was taking for Nasing Bury, back into the Big Woods. How beautifully hounds stuck to his line, drove him from end to end, and forced him out at the Monkham side, only those with them could tell, and when on the crest of Monkhams Hill at the back of the Hall, we came to a check, the Master exclaimed, "Is this the field?"

> "Hei mihi, qualis erat! Quantum mutatus ab illo,
> Hectore, qui redit exuvias indutus Achilli."

There were only six with hounds, the Master, "The Admiral," Mr. F. Ball, Mr. H. Sworder, and Mr. Todhunter, whose face was covered with blood, for he had had a nasty fall swinging down the hill for the valley below. The Brothers Sewell came trotting up, and when we took to the country beyond—Mr. Beale Colvin dropped from the clouds into his usual place in the van—and again we started on the old line, a right good one of varied fencing, towards Obelisk Wood.

Checking in the road for a second that runs up to Galley Hills, we were joined by several who had missed the hunt through the wood. Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. N. Gilbey, and Mr. Crossman, the latter, with quick eye, detecting a single hound running forward over the grass for the brook. There was the fence out of the road, the gap newly done up, and too thorny even for the Admiral's black, but he found us something lower down. The huntsman popped through between some stumps, and Mr. Sworder's black, after hanging fire, followed suit, while as for "Joseph," after a dozen had gone, he became impatient and cut in in front of a lady, and was just in time to splash through the ford, after the huntsman and the Admiral, and drop into Honey Lane after the Master, when a man with a bill-hook in his hand said, "No use going there; it is all wire." So away went nearly everyone up the lane, but at the bottom of the wired fence there was a gate, and opposite to it another, and all in line of hounds, and one fence only, before we jumped into the top end of Warlies Park, over which hounds ran without a falter, leaving the house on the right.

In the park men were halloaing, saying the fox had doubled back, and although they were running with great dash, Easterby wanted to stop them —they would have taken some turning. Running straight for Copped Hall Green, there was Crawley in the road saying they were running heel, as hounds dashed over the road into the park, but Crawley's fox and Easterby's fox could not have been the same. My own impression is that both were wrong, for when Bailey once more laid the hounds on after they had been turned, not on the line, mind you, of the fox viewed nearly a mile back over the park, but on Crawley's fox, they never ran with the same dash, and so said Mr. C. E. Ridley; and, having lost a shoe, he, with Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ball, gave up at Claveringbury Farm. Hoping to pick up the hunted fox, or rather one of them, for we must have had several in front of us during the day, the huntsman carefully searched Galley Hills. Keeping back in one of the rides to try and get a view, for I was as anxious to kill as he was, I heard "gone-away" once more, and galloping round the Monkhams end saw hounds running most beautifully over the grass for Hollyfield Hall. A most sparkling little burst of fifteen minutes over the marshes, ending near Galley Hills—few, very few indeed, being left to see it—the Master, Mr. Arkwright, Mr. R. B. Colvin, Mr. G. Buxton, Mr. Crossman, Mr. Todhunter, Mr. Newman Gilbey, and Dr. Love. I mustn't forget the doctor, for I never lost sight of him after the mare (why didn't I stick to "Joseph," he was not a bit done?) had trodden on my ribs or parted with him until when the game was all over he had pronounced them intact. A friend in need is a friend indeed, and of all

friends you have only to require his services to appreciate that none can compare with "the doctor." The following extracts are from a letter from a keen fox-hunting cousin of Dr. Love's who was then enjoying some good sport in France. It was dated "Hôtel Continental," March 10th :—

"I have been very lucky seeing sport here. Yesterday we ran an eight-year-old wild boar for two-and-a-quarter hours with Prince de Joinville's hounds. Twice the boar swam a broad river, and once took to a lake, where we headed him, and saw 35 hounds (out of 40) follow him. One tackled him and was badly wounded. The Duke of Chartres tried two rifle shots at him as he came out without effect. Charging the hounds he wounded several, but in another half hour was brought to bay in a wood, stood two more shots and got away again, to be finally shot in a stream. All the wounded dogs had to be attended to before they 'broke up' the boar with the usual ceremonies. *Cor de chasse* music, skinning, making believe alive to hounds, &c., took an hour. The liveries are like old Watteau pictures, and I never saw such magnificent weight-carrying hunters, Dublin show winners, &c. The woods here are very intricate, but lots of fine sound gallops, much used by the Chantilly Race Stud. You can gallop for five miles in a straight line. On Saturday saw a fine stag shot in lake after an hour's run with Duke de Grammont, and on Thursday one killed in open at Forest of Hallate (Count de Vallon's), after a gallop of two-and-a-quarter hours, mostly through open forest, the huntsman having to stop and go for a fresh horse. Saw everything—deer trotting, beat before pack, at bay, held by hounds, and finished by Master (who gave me a foot) with dagger sword. Have also seen others taken by Duke of Chartres' pack.'

Beech Hill Park

CHAPTER VII.

Beech Hill Park—The Point to Point Races at Hatfield Heath, 1897—*Major Ricardo and "General Banks"—"Catapult"—The Annual Meeting,* 1897—*Mark Hall Wood—The fortunate few—S. Chisenhale Marsh and "Wheel of Fortune"—F. Loyd and "Rosamond"—Cyril Charrington and his hunter "Bullfinch"—A Sharp burst from the Moors—Going towards Shenfield—Mr. Henry Charrington on "The Swell"—Bailey hunts the hounds for the first time in season* 1897-98—*Fitz Walters—Mrs. Crossman's "Ruth"—Douglas Crossman's "Sweetmeat"—Tyler's X—Guy Gilbey—Warwickshire Brooks—A. Waters—Mrs. Waters—A. J. Edwards—"Baroness"—Guy and Noel Edwards—Garnish—Wilson Springs—A gallop at last—Sydney V. Green—Two favourite hunters—The Annual Meeting,* 1898—*A. S. Bowlby on "Piccadilly"—Rev. Austin Oliver—Endon Oliver—W. Dalton—The Point to Point Races at Stondon,* 1898—*To Finish the Season—A worst on record—Writtle Park—Langleys—Killing Deer in the field.*

THE Point-to-Point races were not postponed after all, though the day before all sorts of rumours were flying about that they would be, the ground being simply in a terrible condition. But postponement might have done no good, for who could tell whether the ground would be any drier in a week's time, and, if it were, in would go the barley, for now it is weeks behind time. So perhaps it was as well that they were not put off, though it would have been difficult to have held them under more adverse conditions, a morning sun only tempting people out to their destruction, for the races were run in pitiless rain storms. That many an owner would not run his horse, notably Mr. W. Buckmaster his "Success," which was very much fancied, was not surprising: but that no serious casualties to horses or riders occurred is certainly worthy of comment, for falls were numerous, as horses reeling from exhaustion simply staggered into the winning field or fell helpless and inert ere they reached it. "The farmers won't go tumbling about," said an onlooker, and ere the words were out of his mouth three were down in a row. That "Sir Frederick," Mr. Milbank's horse, should add another to his numerous victories, shows

what a wonder he is. Yes, Mr. Avila, you never made a greater mistake when you missed him.

"Catapult," romping home—pulling, I'll trouble you—shows that through dirt she has no rival. Mr. Arkwright's second win on her was a very popular event. Have you ever noticed how "Catapult" is built? If not, have a look at her. Mark her wide chest, extraordinary deep girth, short back, and muscular quarters, and get hold of one like her if you can. Through deep plough she gallops with as much ease as most horses can go on the grass. Had the going been light, she couldn't have gone the pace—and some other horse would have won. They tell me—I was not there—that the ditches were enormous, and that the fences were of the most blood-curdling description—real rough, straggling old places that you could neither see over nor through. Major Ricardo on that grand horse, "General Banks," won a well-deserved victory in the heavyweight. He has had a good many flutters, and gone very near the mark more than once, so at last perseverance and pluck have been crowned with success. My heartiest and best congratulations to you, Major!

Major Ricardo and "General Banks"

"General Banks," a grey gelding by "Baron Farnley," is a good specimen of a weight-carrying hunter with a good turn of speed. In 1893 he won the heavy weight Divisional Point to

Point at Aldershot, also the Staff College Point to Point, repeating the latter performance in 1894, when he became the property of his present owner, who, in four Point to Point races in Essex heavy-weight class, placed him each time, viz., third in the Essex Welter and Royal Artillery races in 1895, and a very good second after cutting out most of the work in the Welter of 1896; finally winning a well deserved victory when the going was desperately heavy at Hatfield Heath in 1897.

They tell me that the spectators who were not a-horseback could see little of the races. Carriages were not allowed to enter a single field on account of the state of the ground, and those who arrived on bicycles, as did three adventurous spirits, were simply soaked to the skin: as the General's son shook his coat you could hear the water squabbing about inside; and with a nine-mile ride to the station, no change, and a journey to town, 'tis surprising that we have not heard of an inquest. But low shoes and coloured stockings—green, yellow, or blue! Oh! ye gods! fancy facing the mud in such a costume. You saw it from your carriage, my lady, I think. Indeed, the mud was up to their knees, and tell me that they were not bicyclists! There were some chic costumes, dear Madge, in the morning. There were some draggled-looking habiliments ere sun had set, and in rain and mud, and mud and rain, the Point-to-Point of 1897 at Hatfield Heath had become a matter of history.

The Annual Meeting, March 20th, 1897.

Would have been there on wheels if the doctor would have allowed it, and the Accidental Assurance Railway Passengers—good office—(couldn't be otherwise, since our "Hon. Secretary" is one of the Directors) continued their weekly payments. But my heart was there, and my best wishes for the fulfilment of the universal desire throughout the Hunt that the connecting links which each year bind Mr. Bowlby and Mr. Arkwright closer and closer to all sections of the hunting community should not be severed. All came right; all as we wished it, and, while other hunts are at their wits' end to find a Master (for who will undertake the task in the present day, even if they carry the horn, for their own pleasure?), we are fortunate enough to have to record no change in masters or staff. This alone will make the annual meeting of 1897 the most important event of the season. In many years we have been accustomed to a great day's sport to further emphasise the yearly gathering of the Clans. Everything seemed propitious for it on Saturday when the huge cavalcade moved off from the Kennels. ('Twould have been a grand chance for a Jubilee gift to the R.A.B.A.)

A good scenting day, the ground moist enough in all conscience, a good country before them, and any number of foxes about, and yet throughout the day luck was against all but a fortunate few who, come what may, rarely if ever go home before the hounds. For the sunny day had doubtless tempted foxes into the open, and Mark Hall, Barnsley's, Latton, Harlow Park, Parndon Woods, Nasing Coppice, and Deer Park—regular foxland—up to Galley Hills were all drawn blank, and not before they reached the last-named covert did they find a fox, and he without any *bouquet de Reynard*. Weary and tired, horses and riders, all the huge field, had

dwindled down to about five-and-twenty, when, about 4 p.m., the order was given for an advance on "Tattle Bushes." Here they found a fox at once; that there was a ravishing scent was apparent the moment hounds came away at the top end and Nasing side of the covert. The huntsman inside the wood could never get to the head of affairs before Pinnacles was reached, after traversing a most intricate country. Running close up to Merryweather's Farm, the fox doubled back, and running close to Roydon, a lot of hounds were left behind, and a good many of their followers too, through high banks, narrow lanes, and a deep bog.

When hounds are going the pace there is no time to bring a stirrup iron into action on an obstinate lock sufficiently quick to make up for lost time, and catch the beauties fleeting on in front. Better, my friend (you rubbed that twenty-five minutes in going home), had you quickly followed Messrs. Evans and Sewell over the two fences, for they and three

Mark Hall Wood

others—lucky mortals—were the only ones with hounds to Pinnacles. Here, however, most of them got up—the Roydon road proving a good friend to the rearguard—and running the meadows for Parndon Church, pulled their fox down under its shadows, and sent a merry little band home in a very contented frame of mind. A few of their names if you will —Messrs. Ball, Gregory, Fitch, Sewell (2), Evans, Tilling, Dawson, Weston Crocker, F. Green, one of the Masters, Mr. Arkwright, one of the Secretaries, Mr. Bevan.

"Wheel of Fortune" was a favourite polo pony of Mr. Marsh's during perhaps the brightest period of the existence of the West Essex Polo Club. If lovers of polo in the western borders of Essex were much indebted to Mr. Marsh for placing his beautiful ground at Gaynes Park at their disposal,

lovers of hunting are under a still deeper obligation to him for the liberal way in which he has always preserved foxes.

It is a good omen for the future that his son is as keen about hunting as ever his father was about polo.

S. Chisenhale Marsh and "Wheel of Fortune"

Frederick Loyd, taken on his favourite hunter, a chestnut mare by "Wakefield." One of the best animals he ever owned, she has been carrying him well with the Essex since 1885, the year he purchased her at Deacon's V.W.H. Repository, Swindon, at which time she was but a half-broken four-year-old.

Bred by John Robson, jun., of Belfast, she was v.h.c. at Dublin Horse Show in 1885, and in the same year made her first acquaintance with the ditches of Essex, going bang into three the first day she was out. She fell, on an average, once or twice every time Mr. Loyd rode her for the first three

weeks, but made handsome amends for these shortcomings by her subsequent behaviour, for Mr. Loyd only recalls one fall during the twelve to thirteen seasons he has ridden her since, and that through a rabbit-hole on a bank. The worst one to break he ever owned. Mr. Loyd was well repaid for all the trouble he took with this young 'un, and exercised very good judgment when he bought her in the ring.

Frederick Loyd on "Rosamond"

"Bullfinch," a bay with black points, standing 16 hands, came from Sumner, of Market Harborough, and carried Mr. Charrington well in his undergraduate days with the Fitzwilliam and Cambridgeshire, and with the Essex Hounds in the early nineties. When I look at this portrait I am sadly reminded once again of the uncertainty of life. Only on the

30th October, '96, had I met Mr. Charrington out with Mr. Quare's Harriers at Roydon, riding a very good-looking grey pony, formerly the property of the late Mrs. Arkwright, and apparently in the heyday of health and vigour. On November 1st he sent me the above photograph. It came back from the engravers on December 3rd, and showing it to my wife she made the remark, "Charrington? I saw the death of a Mr.

Cyril Norman Charrington and his favourite hunter "Bullfinch"

Charrington in the *Standard* yesterday." Not until I had seen the ill news myself could I believe that it was the same with whom I had parted only a month previously. Known to me as a good sportsman and a kind-hearted and genial friend in the hunting field, it seems inexpressibly sad that death in the shape of typhoid fever should have claimed for his own one so young. He was only 30.

My notes for season 1897-1898 are few and far between. My first gallop with fox-hounds was on Monday, January 24th. Hounds had met at Dagenham in the morning; riding out late I came across them near

Bentley Mill, and saw hounds thrown into the Moors, where they found and went away at once. The short cut to hounds over a crumbling bank, out of the road we were all standing in, was soon found by Mr. Waltham, Messrs. Tyndale White (father and son) and Mr. Sheffield Neave accepting his lead at once. Galloping down the side of the wood, as they jumped into the road, they could see the heavy brigade charging down it.

"A rare scent" said Mr. Green, as with united forces we took to the country again; no time, in fact, to pick or choose a fence as hounds raced along in the direction of Dagenham—Harry Sworder on his grey and young John White the two leaders. After going for some half-a-dozen fields we were confronted by a wire fence, the only weak spot in it, a stiff stile. All, with the exception of Mr. R. Bevan, who got over well on his grey, turned aside over a fence to the right and another to the left, and then had

Going towards Shenfield

the brook in front of them; some rails into the ploughed field just before we came to the brook bringing a man down and further delaying those of us who had got behind. A lady's hat coming off gave me personally plenty of opportunity for scanning the brook, but not for catching hounds until they checked in the next covert.

Directly hounds left it we encountered another very funny fence. Two feasible spots; one by a tree was indicated by Mr. Sworder, the other, a stiff stile, by Mr. G. H. Lee, who was riding the silver-maned horse he had recently purchased from Mr. R. B. Colvin. Without the slightest check hounds flew along to Navestock Heath, very few anywhere near them, except Mr. Ford Barclay, Mr. D. Crossman, Mr. Sworder and Mr. Bevan. Running over Navestock Heath, we lost this fox near the Kelvedon coverts below Bois Hall. Subsequently in Navestock we picked up another, a very poor specimen of the wild fox, and killed him on the far side of the Park.

This horse has not been a bad servant to a man who not only likes to go, but does go, very straight across country for he has carried him with hounds since 1891, the year he rode him in the Point-to-Point at High Roding Bury. Mr. H. Charrington has taken up his quarters in the Meynell country, much to the disappointment of his Essex friends, for such men as he can ill be spared from our midst.

Henry Charrington on "The Swell"

Saturday, January 29th 1898. Biked over to a meet of Mr. Quare's Harriers at Nasing Common; met R. B. Colvin going to have his first golf lesson at the hands of the Rev. T. W. Goddard, the Hon. Secretary of the Nasing Golf Club.

Lady Gwendoline Colvin, Mr. Gerald Buxton on his grey, Mr. Patchett, Q.C., Mr. W. H. Sewell on "Jack," Miss Dorothy Sewell on her Arab, Mr. G. H. Lee on his chestnut, J. Pelly on "Snowstorm,"

were among the few out to enjoy a moderate day's sport. Biked home again,* William leading old "Berserker" back.

Wednesday, February 2nd, 1898. After luncheon I rode out with William in the direction of Galley Hills, and met E. Cockett hacking home. He said that hounds had had a very good and quick thing up-wind in the morning from Copped Hall to ground in the Forest. Riding on, we came in for a very pretty sight. Hounds had left Galley Hills (by the time we reached the covert) with a fox in the direction of Nasing Bury, and this fox was being holloaed back into covert (Galley Hills) just as hounds could be descried, some mile away running in the valley, and a very pretty sight it was to witness. At first they hardly appeared larger than guinea pigs on a billiard table, but gradually they took larger shape, and

Fitz Walters

at the same time we could hear their musical notes, and could mark the leading riders in close attendance (hounds occasionally getting a field to the good).

In direct line with them, a lady and a man in pink leading. Straight for the fence in front of her rode the lady† and landed safely over. The man‡ in pink turned away, and was some time before he could find an easy place in the next fence. A great many people were waiting in the road below, and as the big phalanx came charging up the hill I recognised that *Bailey was hunting the hounds himself* (*the first time this season of* 1897-98 *he had been able to do so*). Bailey lost his fox in Galley Hills. As he had some difficulty mounting his second horse Mr. Bevan, who in the absence of

* The ground must have been pretty dry and hard.—Ed.
† Mrs. Douglas Crossman on "Ruth." ‡ Mr. R. Y. Bevan.

both Masters through indisposition was in charge, not wishing to overdo him, gave the order for home—to the disappointment of none of us, for it was really too windy and too cold to enjoy hunting. When hounds ran up to his coverts Mr. Colvin *sans* hat was leading the van. Mr. and Miss Peel, Mrs. Crossman, Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. Waltham, Mr. Baddeley and Miss Morgan stayed to the end, and Mrs. Wythes made her first appearance, I believe, with the Essex Hounds. As I rode by the bridle path through Clavering Bury Farm I saw old V——,§ who had so recently warned the Hunt off his land and wired his fences in every direction,

Mrs. Douglas Crossman on "Ruth"

prowling about behind a hedge with his gun, doubtless intending to give Reynolds a warm salute should he venture near him.

From the diary extract of the same day I see that the ground was drying up rapidly and note that so far the season had been an extraordinary one for its mildness and dryness. Sport since January 1st had been very good; up to Christmas it had been most indifferent, having been

§ I must have maligned Mr. V. in this journal entry, as subsequently I interviewed Mr. V. and got him to promise to remove his wire.—Ed.

too dry‖ for hunting, and the lack of Bailey's assistance made matters worse.

By "Jannock," out of "Candy"; "Candy," by "Candidate" by "Gladiateur." This brilliant, well-bred hunter, more at home in the flying than the banking part of the Essex country, gave Mr. Crossman his first fall at a Blackmore meet the very day that he was photographed. "Sweetmeat" always carried Mr. Crossman in the very first flight with as much ease as his

Douglas Crossman on "Sweetmeat"

wife's beautiful black mare "Ruth," whose portrait is given on the opposite page, carries her graceful owner to the front. Mrs. Crossman commenced riding "Ruth" as a four-year-old when she was living in the Meynell country, where the mare gained a great reputation, and was considered by some good judges to be one of the best hunters in the Midlands. Mrs. Crossman refused £200 for her as a five-year-old. The mount

‖ The opening meet in November at Matching Green had to be postponed owing to the dry state of the ground.—Ed.

would not have been dear at double the figure when Mrs. Crossman had completed her education, for she has since carried Mrs. Crossman seven seasons, and has never averaged less than twenty-five days in each. Mrs. Crossman rarely goes home before the hounds. This mare in 1898 had the honour of beating all the best horses in the Essex Hunt over the stiffest and biggest country (in the Stondon district) ever chosen for a point-to-point race in Essex. The race was run in a wet fog, and nearing home the mare, ably ridden by Mr. Seymour Caldwell, cleared four strands of naked wire. Mr. Caldwell was leading at the time, and his cry of "ware wire!" as he tipped the high strands, did not exhilarate his pursuers, and he ran home hands down. In 1899, "Ruth," in spite of extra weight, repeated her triumph of 1898, coming in an easy first, steered by Mr. Caldwell (the ground was as hard as iron), and in the same year won the Essex Hunt Club Cup.

Tyler's X

Wednesday, February 16th. Tylers X. The following out: Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Mr. and the Misses Peel (two), Miss T. Buxton, L. Arkwright, Arthur Bowlby and his three sisters (Mr. and Mrs. Bowlby had gone to Mentone), A. J. Edwards, Tyndale White, John White, R. Y. Bevan, T. Gilbey, Guy Gilbey, P. Gold, G. H. Lee, H. Horner, Ford Barclay, Mrs. Singleton (a new comer), H. E. Jones, Miss Jones, C. E. Green, F. Green, J. Green, H. Sworder, D. Gregory, Mr. Tosetti, young

Pyne, R. Barron, D. Crossman, Mr. Charrington, Capt. and Mrs. Bruce, Mrs. Hine, the Misses Blyth and Gold, Messrs. G. H. Lee, F. Loyd, Dr. Love, Mrs. and Miss Waters, Mr. Steele and his son, J. Todhunter and others.

In the afternoon we had a very enjoyable gallop from Parndon Woods, going out at the bottom end and running up nearly to Passmores; before coming back by Todhunters and going on towards Nasing we swung left-handed for Parndon Woods, and without entering them crossed Epping Long Green, and lost our fox near Marles Wood. Miss Eva Bowlby was going in the front all the time and Messrs. Newman and Guy Gilbey and Mr. Ford Barclay were equally conspicuous. The going was very light, but being a very muggy day, it was a tiring one for horses, and a good many tails were wagging before the run was over.

Guy Gilbey

Guy Gilbey comes of the right stock, for he has inherited the love of horses and all connected with them that distinguish his father, Sir Walter Gilbey. Hunting, polo, and point-to-point races find in Mr. Guy Gilbey a devoted follower. Possessing a very good eye to hounds, undaunted nerve and youth, and riding A 1 horses, it would be a matter of comment if Guy Gilbey was not in it in all the best brushes across country with the Essex

or Puckeridge Hounds. He has a great partiality for railway fences, and is a great authority on the difference between Essex and Warwickshire brooks, having sampled a good many of both, and on one occasion, in addition to losing four or five sovereigns, had a narrow squeak of being drowned in one of the latter when staying with Lord Willoughby de Broke, the Master of the Warwickshire Hounds. All regretted the serious accident which kept so good a sportsman out of the saddle in the season 1898-9.

Arthur Waters

Arthur Waters is a very keen rider, and has had longer hacks home than the majority of those who have followed the Essex Hounds, for Saturday is generally his off day and Saturday's meets are never very handy for the Southern borders of our country. Mr. Waters was Captain of the West Essex Polo Club for a good many years and was a great exponent of the galloping game.

Mrs. Waters is devoted to hunting and hockey—in fact, to all out-door amusements: –cricket, tennis, bicycling, polo gymkhanas: she can turn her hand to any of them and hold her own with the best; and her daughter, Miss Georgie Waters, whose portrait will be found on page 122, is equally good at all out-door sports.

Mrs. Waters

Saturday, February 19th. Mr. Quare's Harriers at Copped Hall. Out: Mr. and Mrs. Wythes on foot; riding, R. B. Colvin and his wife, A. J. Edwards, W. and A. Sewell, P. M. Evans, F. Avila, A. R. Steele and Miss Steele, G. Buxton, Mrs. and Miss Waters, F. Ball, G. H. Lee, Mr. Lobb. A medium day's sport, but much too dry and cold for scent,

Thursday, February 24th. The same pack at Beech Hill Park. Out: Mrs. Frank Ball, Edwards, and his two sons (who had obtained a long day off from Eton,) W. Sewell and two of his little girls, A. Sewell, Miss T. and Miss M. Buxton, Mr. Pyne, G. H. Lee, A. Roddick, Mr. Doxat, W. H.

Baddeley, G. Hart, Rev. A. F. Russell (on a chestnut of his own breeding and making), Mrs. Radford, F. Avila, Mrs. and Miss Waters and E. Lobb.

There was little scent, but hounds worked out a slow hunting run, during which young Pyne (what his initials are I don't know) had the bad luck, in taking a bank behind Mr. Russell, to come down and so damage his shoulder that at the next fence into the road it came out. Mr. Hart jumped into wire without damage.

Losing our first hare, we had a short, sharp and straight spin with another from Edwards' place over the Waltham road, losing her below Galley Hills.

Arthur J. Edwards on "Cheeky"

A horse Mr. Edwards was riding in 1898 with the Essex Hounds, and as Mr. Edwards commenced hunting with them in 1871-72, he may fairly lay claim, in spite of his very youthful appearance, to being one of their oldest followers. Mr. Edwards has always taken a very keen interest in all that pertains to the welfare of the Essex Hunt, and for many years organised in a most successful manner the Hunt Races at Rundells, near Harlow. Perhaps the best hunter

Mr. Edwards ever rode was "Baroness," whose portrait is here given. Purchased in 1878 from the man who bred her (Mr. Winder, a well-known Essex farmer and devotee of hunting, living at Thunderley Hall, Radwinter), she carried Mr. Edwards no less than eleven seasons, and finally bred him a colt which, under the name of "Mistletoe Bough," he rode for three seasons and sold to Mr. Percy Whitaker, Master of the Oakley Hounds.

"Baroness"

Guy Edwards and his brother Noel, both take after their father in their love of fox-hunting, though, if I may be permitted to say so, the younger one is a bit the keener; he hasn't, however, so far to fall, and does not mind taking a toss as long as he lands the right side of a fence. He left a good many the wrong side of one in a run from Shalesmore in January, 1898, when he jumped some stiff rails on his clever pony. The grey which carries the elder brother so well is a very well-known performer in Essex, for she carried Major Maryon Wilson in the first flight for several seasons, and though I have seen the Major turn a complete somersault with the grey over a double in the Dagenham country, I never saw the grey turn her head from a fence, or the Major either.

Guy Edwards on "Nellie Grey"

Arthur Noel Edwards on "Bob"

Saturday, February 26th. At Waples Mill. Started late and caught hounds just as they were being thrown into Screens. A large Saturday field out, many faces unknown to me, but I spoke to the following people during the day: Tresham Gilbey, Miss Gold, P. Gold and his wife, Capt. and Mrs. Bruce, A. J. Edwards, P. M. Evans, Young, Marriage (two), David Christy (two), Ford Barclay, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, E. and F. Ball, Mrs. and Miss Waters, Capt. Kortwright, riding his little blood chestnut mare (he was going to be married in June and sailing for India in July); C. E. Ridley, W. Ridley, A. Bowlby, Tyndale White, John White, E. Pelly, Edmund Charrington, Rev. Maryon Wilson, C. E. Green, Mrs. Neill, H. E. Jones, Miss Jones, H. Sworder, F. Avila, W. S. Horner, H. Horner, George Hart, Sheffield Neave, H. J. Price, Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., F. Green, Miss M. Green, Mrs. Weston Crocker, L. Pelly, A. J. Tweed and H. R. Tweed, Capt. Cairns, Young, Green (Pongo), Lobb, Carr, and Newman Gilbey.

Garnish

Screens blank, also Berners Wood, Garnish, Lords and Leaden, it was nearly 4 p.m. when we arrived at Wilson Springs, where we had the misfortune to chop a fox to the bitter disappointment of everyone. We then dragged on to Canfield Mount, Canfield Hart, and Canfield Thrift with similar results. In Poplars, however, there was a welcome note directly hounds were thrown in, and a ringing brute he appeared to be at first, but eventually he took a good line by Wilson Springs, past Canfield Mount to Garnetts.

The ground was so dry that not only did the dust fly up in clouds as horses galloped across the ploughed fields, but it even flew up as hounds ran; and, curiously enough, scent was much better on the plough than the grass.

Another curious thing. At High Roothing Street C. E. Green actually left hounds before the run was over.

A Gallop at Last.—The meet, "Birch Hall;" the date, Monday, February 28th. A good muster, mounted and on wheels, including many ladies, viz., Mrs. Gerald Buxton, Misses M. and T. Buxton, Mrs. H. J. Price, Mrs. McIntosh, Mrs. Radford, Miss Jones, Miss Barnes, Miss Morgan, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. and Miss Waters, Miss Fane, Mrs. Neill, Mrs. Crossman, Miss M. Green, Mrs. Barron, Mrs. F. Ball, Miss Savill, Major Ricardo, Tyndale White, John White, C. E. Green, F. Green, Sydney Green,* Loftus Arkwright, J. Todhunter, F. Avila, H. Sworder, A. J. Edwards, F. Basham, R. C. Lyall, D. Crossman, Capt. Bruce, Ford Barclay, G. H. Lee, A. Roddick, Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., G. Buxton, Victor Buxton, R. Barron, E. Cockett, R. Bevan, W. M. Galloway, Col. Fane,

Wilson Springs

D. Cunliffe Smith, R. Cunliffe Smith. R. Waltham, A. Flint, H. J. Price, and others.

Hacked on to the meet with Douglas Crossman, who was riding my horse "Liscarton," having screwed up most of his own. Trotted straight off to the late Mr. Mills' stick heap—blank; ditto, Barber's; ditto, the Hill Hall—Sir Charles Smith's coverts; not even a whimper in Beachetts. Georgie Waters, however, put up a fox in Gaynes Park, but beyond running him the length of Ongar Park Woods we could do nothing.

Drew the rest of the Gaynes Park preserves, not expecting to find again, Bailey remarking, as we reached Rough Talleys, that if we did find, hounds would not run, as there was no scent. Taking it rather too easy in consequence, I suddenly awoke to the fact that something was up, and none too

* He volunteered and went to the front in 1900.—Ed.

soon either, for hounds were away to Weald Coppice, and the van, including Crossman, were over the road, and the van had secured the opening of the railway gates, though it cost Mr. Crossman his smallest coin, 2s.

As we cleared Rough Talleys, craners were riding down the first fence, scanning it, and after being nearly knocked over by one of them, "Berserker" jumped it sideways most easily. On over the stubble at racing pace we

Sydney V. Green

laggards rode to catch the hounds, a gate into the North Weald road, a gate out, but the pace too good for either the leaders thought, the fence into the road bringing Mr. Gerald Buxton (who was riding a horse of Mr. Tilling's) down a rare crumpler and flattening his sandwich case out of all shape.

Hounds were two fields ahead, but swinging to the left for Weald Coppice, and we were abreast of them before they entered it; a cry of music, a momentary linger beyond Mr. Bosley's, and they were away again at a splitting pace for Rundells. Mrs. F. Ball was sending her bay along over the beans as we converged together for the fence at the bottom (those who

had gone with the huntsman round the covert and those who had gone through the yard of Weald Hall).

Miss M. Buxton, Capt. Bruce, Ford Barclay, Arkwright and a few more, were first, and half-a-dozen of them fumbling at a gate at the next fence, ditch with rails beyond, which the welter-weight smashed, and the d—l take the hindmost, was the cry, as the bitch pack tore along without a check, until they reached the back of Horse Shoe Farm, where our friend had been headed. Here he ran the meadows as far as the Cross Keys—Mr. Baker opening his gate to let the excited throng through. Crossing the Thornwood road, hounds were at it again, with a burning scent across Rickett's

Miss C. Pelly on "Bishop"

big field; leaving it at the furthest corner, hounds piped along field after field, till they threw up at the barrel drain at Marles Wood—a ripping burst. Tyndale White voted the Colonel's* horse a mile too slow. Miss Barnes had the misfortune to have her horse drop dead in the middle of the run, and Mr. Galloway, staying to assist, lost the good place he had maintained. Mrs. Crossman, on her pony, was at the tail of the hounds all the way, and laying close up came Ford Barclay, D. Crossman, Miss M. Buxton, Capt. Bruce, Mr. R. Waltham, and the welter-weight, Mr. Fitch, of Romford.

* Colonel Lockwood's roan horse.

Miss Christabel Pelly on "Bishop," I expect almost looks upon this game little bay cob standing 14.3 as her own, for she rides it almost as frequently as her mother, Mrs. L. Pelly, of Bowes. "Bishop" is a great favourite of Mrs. Pelly's, having carried her and her daughter for three or four seasons without a fall, and I may add, has carried them very straight over our intricate country.

Mrs. R. Parkes on "Gay Boy"

Mrs. Parkes never regretted her judgment in purchasing "Gay Boy," a grey gelding 14.3, in 1892. A good hack, capital harness cob, and a pleasant mount with hounds, he carried her well for four seasons, and became a great favourite. Alas, that, in the words of Whyte Melville, Mrs. Parkes should have to write :—

> "Now for all my love and care, I've an empty stall and bare;
> I shall never ride my gallant horse again."

Lord Rookwood presided over the annual meeting, which was held at the Green Man, Harlow, on March 9th, 1898, at which the following members of the Hunt were present: Rev. L. Capel-Cure, R. B. Colvin, Capt. Bruce, Messrs. C. E. and F. Green, Loftus Arkwright, G. Buxton, Ford Barclay, Newman Gilbey, Howard Fowler, F. Ball, H. E. Jones, C. E. Ridley, G. Dawson, Tyndale White, T. H. Harrison, R. C. Lyall, H. Sworder, E. Charrington, H. J. Price, Chaffey Collin, E. Pelly, F. Loyd, R. D. Hill, J. Swire, George Hart; Col. Lockwood and Mr. A. J. Edwards being conspicuous by their absence. Before leaving the place of meeting Mr.

Arthur Salvin Bowlby on "Piccadilly"

Arthur Bowlby managed to secure several excellent photographs, one of which is here reproduced. Of the sport that followed little comment is required. Under the influence of a wind which had been blowing steadily from the east for several days the ground, had become dry and hard. Contrary to precedent, the Osiers and the Moor Hall coverts were first drawn, and then taking Barnsleys, Harlow, Latton Park and Parndon Woods, we were not rewarded with a find until we gained the Galley Hill coverts, a very sure find with the Squire of Monkhams in residence. Finding at once, the fox broke the Monkam side; a quick turn back and we were away on fair terms for Deer Park, and our fox had cleared Nasing Coppice for Parndon

A meet at "The Green Man," March 8, 1898.

H. J. Price
R. C. Lyall
George Hart
C. E. Ridley
J. Swire
W. Crocker
J. Bailey
A. Sewell
L. Arkwright
H. Sworder
J. Pelly
Miss Bowlby
N. Gilbey
D. Crossman
Mrs. Crossman

Woods before he was headed. Turning back to Deer Park, the huntsman had some difficulty with the indifferent scent, working out a line to Warlies. *En route* over a trivial ditch near Deer Park, Captain Bruce's chestnut horse "Roy" came down, and with the rider hung up and the horse trampling about him, it was a marvel how the Captain escaped so lightly.

Very few, except C. E. Green, D. Crossman, J. Green, R. Hill, N. Gilbey, F. Basham, stayed to the end to see Pinnacles and Parndon Hall coverts drawn blank.

Rev. Austin Oliver

Rev. Austin Oliver, like the immortal Jack Russell, is as good in the pigskin as the wood, and like the Devonian, would have been equally unhappy had his lines not been cast where hunting obtained. Though he now lives in Hertfordshire, he gets a taste of the royal sport that he enjoyed for so many years in Essex when his father was Rector of Latton. Essex men would welcome him back in their midst.

Wednesday, March 16th. Hatfield Heath, 12 o'clock. At the meet, amongst others, the Master, Mr. Arkwright, Mrs. Arkwright, Arthur Bowlby, Miss E. Bowlby, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Gold (just back from their

honeymoon), Tresham and Guy Gilbey, H. Blyth, Philip Gold, A. R. Steele and his son, Rev. L. Scott, G. Dawson, Weston Crocker, Edmund Charrington, Miss Docwra, Newman Gilbey, R. Y. Bevan, Capt. and Mrs. Bruce, D. Crossman, A. J. Edwards, G. H. Lee, E. Pelly, Mrs. and Miss Waters, W. Baddeley, Ford Barclay, John White, G. Willis, S. Fitch, Miss M., Miss T. and Miss C. Buxton, R. C. Lyall, F. Basham, G. Harris, V.S., Mr. and Mrs. F. Ball, Miss Barnes, E. Quare, Miss Quare, A. Sewell, Jim Cockayne (the Puckeridge huntsman), Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Sheffield Neave, Ralph Bury, Mrs. Neill and others.

We found in the Bassingbourne coverts, the Hatfield end, and had a very pretty burst indeed, 15 minutes up wind to Stansted, right up to the station, and came back past some ancient encampments, and making a big circle reached Bassingbourne again in 55 minutes. Everyone very keen, the country hardly open enough or the pace hot enough to shake the ruck off.

Endon Oliver and his favourite hunter "Bob"

Endon Oliver, taken with his favourite hunter "Bob." Alas, that he has joined the majority. No kinder-hearted fellow ever got on a horse in Essex. With his sister, Mrs. Frank Ball, and his brother Austin, whose portraits are given on pages 195 and 226, he was brought up in an atmosphere of hunting, and the tastes that he so early imbibed clung to him until his health gave way. He is one of the many we look forward to meeting again in the fields Elysian.

The Point-to-Point Races came off on Saturday, March 19th, at Stondon. According to all accounts (I was not present myself), it was about the stiffest course that had ever been chosen for a point-to-point race in Essex. This may probably be partly accounted for by the fact that fences in the Stondon country are more generally crept than flown over, when suitable places in them can be more readily found; but in a race they have to be taken pretty well where you come at them with little time for pulling up at them. Again, it was so foggy that the chance of picking out a good place in a fence was further diminished, with the result that the winner in the light-weight race (in which there were eighteen starters) flew four strands of wire with the ditch on the take-off side. Mr. Seymour Caldwell was the bold individual who took this line, and he won very easily on Mrs. Crossman's "Ruth," Mr. Sheffield Neave coming in second. There were any number of falls.

William Dalton on the "Clown"

The Welter Race, in which twelve started, was won by Mr. W. Dalton on his grey horse, "The Clown." Mr. Dalton scored by being able to pull up the quickest when they came to the wire and pop through a gap made in it by the light weights in the previous race, Mr. Blyth was leading up to that point. Mr. Crossman came in a good second on his bay. The Farmers' Race was won by Captain Bruce on "Dairymaid." There was a lot of grief in this race, for the competitors seemed to have picked out the

worst places in the brook. One horse landed with his head against the further bank and slipped back into a ravine, into which a good-sized dining room could have been comfortably stowed away.

Mr. Arkwright, who was riding last year's winner "Catapult," came down and received a nasty cut on the face from his mare's foot. Mr. H. R. Tweed and Mr. Guy Gilbey were amongst the victims.

Mr. Dalton is as smart across country as he is in his get-up, and, like Whyte Melville's dandy, he is all there when leaving covert. However big, black and strong a fence faces him, Mr. Dalton possesses a heart big enough and a horse good enough to tackle it, and he is always one of the pioneers in the Hunt point-to-point races. In 1898 at Stondon, over the stiffest point-to-point course ever selected in Essex since the inauguration of these races, he came in an easy winner on "The Clown" in the red coat Welter Race, Mr. D. Crossman being second.

To Finish the Season.

Writtle Park, 12 o'clock Monday, March 21st, 1898. Writtle Park had been taken this year by Mr. A. O. Barnes, and it was by his kind invitation that a lawn meet was held on this occasion. The day was quite appropriate for a function of that description; the sun shining brightly out of a sky flecked over by a few white fleecy clouds. No one seemed in a hurry to move off, and Spalding, of Chelmsford, had plenty of time to secure some groups of those who had mustered to witness the fall of the curtain for the season 1897-8.

Everyone who cared to dismount received a hearty welcome, the Misses Barnes dispensing refreshments with grace and hospitality. Mr. Tyndale White attired in mufti stood with his back to the fire surrounded by a group of equally loquacious sportsmen; and Mr. Sands, Mr. Caldwell, General Wood, V.C., Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Price, Mr. and Mrs. E. Sheppard, Mr. F. and Miss M. Green, were amongst those whom we noticed seizing the passing moment.

We drew up to Hylands without, I think, the slightest expectation of finding a fox; in fact, the owner of Hylands, Mr. Arthur Pryor (who, by-the-bye, is 84 years of age) was so hopeless of our finding he told Edwards, who went in to see him, that the sooner Bailey took his hounds away from the garden policies the better it would be for our chances of sport, for his (Mr. Pryor's) terriers hunted it every other day and always found. *What they found* he did not describe; what we found is readily disclosed—"a blank." But the day was too sunny and too many hours of it yet to run, for this futile draw to cause us much disappointment, though we were quite ready for work, but not for a bad start, when hounds took to the open from the Writtle end of the High Woods and threw up the sponge at Lady Grove, Mr. Edwards coming to grief *en route*, and much to his chagrin, in full sight of a would-be purchaser (Mr. Drummy Smith) of his hog-maned bay.

"No luck" muttered the huntsman, as the cast came to nothing, and we retraced our steps to the High Woods. With a good fox in front of us we left Colonel Disney's wood and ran nicely to Margaretting, the railway spoiling what might otherwise have been a good run, as Bailey made a line out as far as Stock. Home by Parson's Springs, Horsefrith Park

and Forest Hall brought a long, and if you were riding a pulling horse like "The Beau," a very tiring day to a close.

In addition to the names already mentioned I noticed the following:—Mr. James Christy, Mr. David Christy, jun., Mr. Avila, Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. R. Tilling, Mr. S. Fitch, Mrs. and Miss Waters, Mr. A. J. Tweed, Mr. Harrison, Mr. and Mrs. Barron, Mr. John White, L. Marriage, jun., Mr. George Hart, Mr. and Miss Quare, Mr. L. Pelly, Mr. R. Bury, Misses E. and M. Morgan, Eustace Savill, Miss Fane, Mr. C. Green, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. T. Kemble (who has seen 83 summers), Rev. L. Capel-Cure and his son, Mr. A. H. Giles, Major and Mrs. Ricardo, Captain Cairns, Mr. Sheffield Neave, Miss Docwra, Mr. E. Charrington, Mr. E. Helme (the future Master of the Essex Union), Mr. T. Howard, and Goddard (huntsman to the Essex Union, and leaving the country at the end of the season).

Langleys

Writtle was not the last day, after all, for a card came on Tuesday, saying hounds meet Swallows Cross, Thursday, March 24th, at 12. I very nearly went, had my boots on ready to do so, when down came a regular blizzard of snow, which effectually damped my ardour.

At the annual meeting of the Essex Stag Hounds, which was held in February, Captain Cairns was elected Hon. Secretary, in place of Mr. T. H. Harrison, who had resigned the post which he had held with such conspicuous success for so many years.

At this meeting the question was raised, should deer be killed in the field, attention having been drawn to the fact that several deer had been killed in the past season. One subscriber said that it had caused ill feeling, and though it might be only sentiment, still sentiment had to be considered

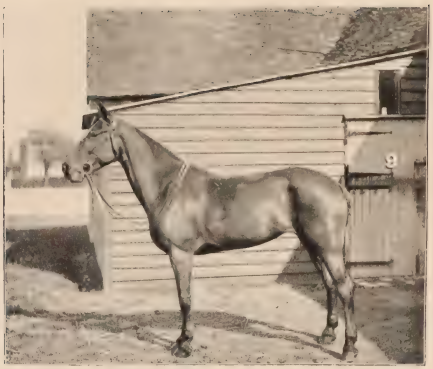
now-a-days. Mr. Sheffield Neave, in reply, said he did not suppose that the people who objected to deer being killed had any distaste for a leg of mutton, and yet the deer were killed in just as humane a manner as sheep. He considered that the hounds must be blooded occasionally, and if the deer were killed in as humane a way as it would be killed in the yard, and the entrails given to the hounds, it would do a great deal of good to hunting. That was his opinion, and so long as he was Master he intended to carry it out. This morbid idea of some people about hunting was too ridiculous.

Mr. Tyndale White, who was presiding at the meeting, thought it only right to tell Mr. Neave that there was a strong feeling in the Hunt about this killing of deer, and he hoped that Mr. Neave would defer to that feeling, or at least undertake not to kill more than one deer a day. Mr. Neave laughingly acceded to that request.

In a neighbouring Hunt, the Essex Union, at the annual meeting, which was held at the Red Lion Hotel, Billericay, under the presidency of Mr. T. H. Horton, a change of Mastership was arranged. Col. Hornby having resigned, Mr. E. T. Helme was elected by the unanimous wish of all the supporters of the Essex Union.

In bringing to a conclusion my notes on the season of 1897-98, it may be fairly stated that Essex was by no means isolated in having to number this season as one of the *worst on record*, and *that, too, in spite of its not being broken by frost*.

The dry weather at the early part of the season, causing a postponement of the opening meet, and the dry weather at the end of it, together with absence of scent and a great scarcity of foxes in some parts of the country, made, with the loss of Bailey's services up to Christmas, a combination of unfavourable circumstances which it would have been very difficult for any pack of hounds to successfully grapple with.



Arthur B. Giles's "Moonstone"

CHAPTER VIII.

A. B. Giles's "Moonstone"—Cubbing in 1898—A fast thing with Mr. Quare's Harriers—An Indian Summer—Moreton—Witney Wood—A land of wire—The Amateurs kill their Fox—Presence of Mind—A Perilous Position—The Parndon flyers—Sewell's "Holloa"—Will Hurrell—Life and Death—High Roothing Street—Olives—The Ash trees on the Sky Line—Back to the Thrift—Blue Gates—18 miles from home—Rev. G. Maryon Wilson and Miss Maryon Wilson—Hunt Breakfasts—The Wood below Bower Wood—A Stern Chase—Left behind—The Happy Four—Norwood—Running for Brick-Kilns—Taking a Header—Boxing Day, 1898—Thoby Wood and Priory—Mr. Baddeley's "Magic"—Mr. P. M. Evans's "Katie"—Toujours Prêt—Broken Backs—Barbers—The South Wilts—Good Easter—Myless Lodge—Jack Turner hunts the hounds—Dorsetshire doubles.

SEASON 1898-99. Being away in Scotland the whole of October, I can give no details of the cubbing season; but I learnt, when I made my first appearance with hounds when they met at Coopersale, on Friday, November 4th, that I had missed very little sport, but with plenty of foxes in most parts of the country, that prospects of sport were very rosy.

A day in the woods in the cubbing season will always attract a large field, so that what was a small number at 9 o'clock had swollen to a large band an hour later, and included some of the most constant followers of the E. H.

Mr. C. E. Green, Mrs. Waters, Mrs. Bennett and her two pretty little girls in pink jackets, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. E. A. Ball, Miss Jones, Miss G. Waters, Mr. and Mrs. D. Crossman, Miss D. Prance, Mrs. W. Sewell and Miss D. Sewell, Mr. Ford Barclay, Mr. W. Cook, Mr. Tyndale White,

Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. S. Fitch, Mr. F. Avila, Mr. G. Buxton, Miss T. and Miss M. Buxton, Mr. Cockett, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Price, Mr. H. J. Miller, Jack Miller, Mrs. Barron, Miss Savill, Mr. C. Savill, Miss Morgan and others.

It was quite a cubbing morning, quite a day for conditioning a horse, for foxes were fairly numerous, and scent was at a discount.

Did not hunt again before Wednesday, November 16th, which broke very foggy; in fact, looked too foggy for hunting. However, the sight of some people hacking on and others driving to the meet at Nasing Common, warned us (my friend, Rev. G. Ward Saunders, was staying with me) that there was no time to be lost if we wished to see anything of the fun. Dressing hastily we hacked by the Epping Bury fields and Harold's Park straight for Galley Hills on the chance of nicking in. Saunders was riding a cob which had carried Mr. Patchett the previous season; I was on "Berserker." Near Orange Wood we passed a large shooting party from Copped Hall, and reached Galley Hills just as hounds were thrown in. Plunging into the wood with the huntsman, the Master, Mr. Arkwright, Mr. and Mrs. D. Crossman, and Ford Barclay, we were rewarded by seeing hounds find at once. Making a bit of a circle in these woods, the fox broke the Deer park end and ran straight through that covert and on to the Coppice, which we reached in a fair state of lather, for it was a close muggy morning. Breaking back again he ran straight back to Galley Hills, did another circle in those woods, and came back by Deer Park, some leading hounds slipping away after their fox nearly up to Copped Hall where they were stopped, the coverts being closed to us owing to the shooting party.

We finished the day by drawing Tattle Bushes blank, not before, however, the cob had put his foot through his Reverence's best hat. Willie Sewell turned up at the end of the day on his new chestnut. There were a good many people out. I noted the following in addition to names already mentioned: Mr. and Mrs. Bowlby, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. and Miss Peel, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Price, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Waters, Miss Tait, Messrs. F. Ball, W. Crocker, F. Green, S. Green, H. Sworder, F. Avila, R. S. Tilling, S. Fitch and E. Hill.

The foggy morning gave place to a bright sunny afternoon, quite typical of the Indian summer through which we were passing.

Our next venture was with the Harriers on Saturday, when Mr. Quare came to Coopersale Hall, and we had a very large muster, quite fifteen ladies, including Miss Quare, Mrs. F. Ball, Miss Tait, Misses D. and M. Sewell, Mrs. Bennett and her sister, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Brook-Alder, Miss Savill, Miss M. Buxton, Rev. G. Ward Saunders on "Old Cockie;" Mr. M. Tosetti, Mr. G. Dawson, young Jack Miller, riding my roan mare; Mr. Gerald Buxton, Mr. Doxat, Mr. Bestall, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. H. W. Lee, Mr. Horner, Mr. F. Avila, Messrs. W. and A. Sewell, Mr. Brook-Alder, A. R. Steele. Found a brace of hares on Mr. H. J. Miller's land, much to Henry John's satisfaction. H. J. was on foot, with Mr. Flint and several others, and in at the death when we killed in covert. Subsequently found another hare near Theydon Garnon Rectory, which ran towards Brook House, and was killed after going very straight for four or five fields over some good fences.

In less than ten minutes we found another hare, which gave us a real good run. Jumping up opposite Brook House, she soon struck the road and held it past James Smith's, Hobbs Cross, and then turned right-handed over his big fields, and led us a merry dance past Barber's and away over the meadows at racing pace to Jordan's Farm, where hounds checked. How-

ever, three or four couple hit it off over the road, and Mr. Quare laying on the body of the pack, they raced away towards Coopersale Church, crossing part of Gaynes Park and taking us over an intricate country over Ted Smith's Farm, up to the Forest. Mr. Doxat, who had been doing most of the piloting, got down here. Young Jack Miller was well up on the roan, in spite of our having come over a very blind bit of country.

Wednesday, November 23rd. Moreton. The previous day had been bitterly cold, and after a sharp wind frost the day broke in a storm of wind and rain, and in the cold sleet we drove to the meet. We had an unusual draw for Moreton. Taking the Bye road to Forest Hall, we found in Witney Wood, but soon lost owing to lack of scent. The half-a-dozen fences we were called upon to jump were nearly all wired.

A Meet at Moreton

In Spain's Wood, Willingale, we had a brace in front of us, but here again scent was at a discount, and we could do little. *En route* to Screens, a fox was chopped in a ditch. In Garnish hounds got away with a fox to Lord's, and came back very fast by Garnish to Waples Mill. In Garnish Bailey got hung up, and I had to catch his clever horse, as he sent him over in front of him into the road. Lost our fox near Waples Mill; hacked back with Saunders and E. Ball.

In the early part of the day F. Green introduced me to Capt. Tod, who had just taken up his residence at Whitehall, Chigwell. Among others out with whom I exchanged greetings I may note:—The Master, Mr. Arkwright, Tyndale White and his son John, who was out for the first time since the accident to his ribs; young Marriage, Howard, Avila, T. Hull, R. Tilling, S. Fitch, H. E. Jones, Miss Jones, Miss Morgan and her niece, Mrs. Waters, Swire and his wife, E. Ridley, C. Willett, Sheffield Neave, R. Y. Bevan, Rev. L. Capel-Cure, Miss Capel-Cure and two of her brothers, E. Cockett, P. Evans, G. Dawson, F. Basham, George Brown, Newman

Gilbey, H. J. Price, Mrs. Price, C. E. Green, A. R. Steele, Miss Steele, A. Giles, Capt. Tufnell, J. Gingell.

On Saturday, November 26th, hounds met at Harlow. Barnsleys, the first covert into which they were thrown, although only a stone's throw from the kennels, held a fox, as surely as the Master held an eager field from galloping up the middle ride ere hounds had had time to clear the covert. What a screaming scent there was as the bitches lashed forward for Harlow Park! Well might Georgie Dawson shake his grey cob out and gallop for all he was worth, and the pink-clad one whisk over the chained gate ere they struck the Common. But the skill of huntsman could not prevent the pack dividing as they rattled their hunted fox round the covert, and roused several other members of his marauding race. Six-and-a-half couple of hounds going away after one of them over a fascinating line of country, with just eight followers in pursuit; the rest of us sticking to the huntsman and the majority of the pack as they drove their fox out of Harlow Park, and eventually raced him over the open to Parndon Woods, and without dwelling there came away and struck Nasing Common, near the Lodge Farm.

The Common rode well, but most of us made for the headland under the boundary hedge, and with hounds smeusing through the fences parallel to us on the left, we could just hold them to Nasing Coppice in spite of the piping scent. A look towards Mr. Nicholl's Farm, an ex-master standing in the gateway; Mr. Harry Sworder on the grey having a look at a broad ditch; the huntsman saying it would do if you put the pace on, and getting over all right, but with no room to spare; one after another following the example of Mr. Newman Gilbey's horse as he obstinately whipped round at some subsequent rails with a slippery take-off, and a field well tailed out ere Deer Park was reached, are visions that rise before me as I pen these notes. The huntsman's and Mr. Avila's corner was the best after all. Round or through Deer Park at the gallop—which you liked—we met at the narrow bridle gate. Into the green lane running from Galley Hills, and entered the wood to cry of hound, but not before one lady* was rescued from a perilous position which, thanks to her perfect nerve and presence of mind, was not a difficult matter. With more pace the thoroughbred black would never have hung in the binder; without cool self-possession on the part of horse, rider and rescuer, the inevitable and bad fall must have taken place. 'Twas well and gracefully done, sir, as with strong arm you drew the imperilled one on to *terra firma*. And then with a fox, possibly a fresh one, away for the Copped Hall country, too far ahead of hounds to permit of their pressing him, we eat our sandwiches in peace in Spratt's Hedgerow.

Yes, Mr. Bromskill was right when he said horses had had a good day's work ere Parndon Woods were reached at something after three, for the going was deep and the air oppressive and heavy from the dank mist that clung to and saturated every hunting coat and skirt. A second horse was a boon—nay, a necessity—on such a day. Parndon Woods always have been, and methinks always will be, one of my favourite coverts while Mr. Todhunter and Mr. James Green hold sway over them. Six times out of seven you'll find there, and the foxes are real wild flyers, and none of your hand-reared cubs; and perhaps the glorious uncertainty of getting away on terms with hounds when they leave these big woodlands gives an added zest and charm to any run when your lucky star is in the ascendant and all goes well.

* Mrs. Crossman.

Hounds were close at their fox that gave us the evening gallop, as they roused him at the Nasing side of the woods, and drove him out with merry music from the middle covert, but not unviewed. "That's Mr. Sewell's holloa," said the huntsman, as he shot past me by the woodside, and he was right, but the chattering music of the ladies was clue enough to ride to as they drove their fox from the top to the bottom of the covert. Only those who sent their horses along at best pace, and they included Mr. F. Green and his daughter, Mr. C. E. Green, Jack and the huntsman, cleared the woods as the hounds streaked across the open and through the little spinney beyond the muddy lane—into which Mr. Peel on his roan seemed to have dropped from the clouds just in the nick of time, making for Passmores.

Hounds fanned along at a rare pace right across the middle of the fields, Mr. Peel leading. Two fields behind, in hot pursuit, came the Master, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. Steele and his son and daughter, the present tenant of Little Laver Hall, and Mr. Ford Barclay. From Passmores, across some heavy ploughs, hounds ran faster than ever. Crossing the brook below Netterswell Bury they swung to the right, and only the lightweights and fast horses could live with them. The pace was too much for Jenkins, but there was time to pull out the watch as Mr. Peel jumped into the road some half-mile below Netteswell Bury, with the leading hounds and the pack checked for an instant, as the fox had run the road, but hardly light enough to see the face of a watch for the steam that came from the heaving flanks of the best-conditioned horse. Fifteen minutes from the find was good enough to this point, and not many more faces to note either who had taken advantage of this slight breather and got to hounds. Mr. and Mrs. Crossman were in the road, I know, and Mr. Galloway and Mr. Sydney Green and Mr. Todhunter, but I cannot add another name from memory, though I believe there were one or two others. Getting on the grass again, fences came thick and numerous, and hounds got away from everyone except Mr. C. E. Green. Running close to Bays Grove they swung to the right, and ran very fast up to Latton, without entering it, and back over Rye Hill Common, and on over the grass to Epping Long Green, finally reaching the big woods forty minutes from the find, the shades of night saving the fox.

On such a scenting day it was rather hard that the huntsman proper did not handle a fox when the eight amateurs did so well who followed the six-and-half couple of hounds that got away with the fox already alluded to from Harlow Park in the morning. Let us see who they were. The secretary* of the Puckeridge Hunt—he had a lot of blood on the knees of his white breeches when he rejoined us, so methinks that he must have been the carver in chief when the carcase was cut up and divided. One lady, the Master's daughter; of course the brush hung at her saddle bow. A thrusting welter from the Roothing country claimed the mask, and no one dare gainsay him. Mr. Ford Barclay waved aloft in triumph a pad; Mr. B. E. Todhunter, Mr. Newman Gilbey, and Mr. Gosling probably secured similar trophies. What the others divided has yet to be learnt. The kill took place at Thornwood Common; the run was over the cream of the grass country; time, 25 minutes; and only those who like sour grapes could affirm that the old women who lived in the cottages near the scene of the obsequies of this bold Harlow Park fox were of any assistance to hounds or huntsmen.

Alas! that I should have to record a sad, very sad event which

* Mr. Tresham Gilbey.

occurred to-day. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true that, while we were enjoying ourselves in this fashion, a scene very different was being enacted over the Border, and a day that began in joy and gladness ended in black sorrow. For young Bill Hurrell, son of the late Mr. Vigne's famous huntsman, and first whipper-in to the Puckeridge Hunt, lay dead in the Quinn brook, with no witness of the sad end other than one hound who watched faithfully by him and growled fiercely at the first intruder on the sad scene. Stunned from a fall towards the end of a very stirring run, young Will met a painless death ere any rescue could reach him, and while the brook ran whispering on with its sad story to the sea, the heavy clouds and dank atmosphere shrouded as joyous a spirit and warm-hearted a lad as ever cheered or rated hound. His loss will be deeply

High Roothing Street

felt far outside the circle of the Puckeridge Hunt; for who is there—Squire, Farmer, or Hedger—who knew young Bill and did not like and have a good word for him. The hearts of all hunting men who knew him or his aged father will beat in deep sympathy for the survivor and the young wife that is left behind.

If a stranger wanted to sample the Roothings of Essex, and the ditches that form such a marked feature of this fine plough country, he could hardly select a better meet than the old-fashioned and picturesque village of High Roothing Street; for some of the most famous coverts in the Roothing country are reached from this fixture, and some of the deepest and blindest ditches in Essex must be crossed in a stirring gallop from Garnett's or Dobb's Woods. No wonder then that men who never miss a Saturday's hunt—come fine, come wet, come fog, or wind—look eagerly forward to a meet in this fine, wild, sporting country.

Sixteen miles to a meet is a fair distance, and it will take the edge off a fresh horse, even a fiery chestnut from the Vale, Master George, but you'll not grudge a long hack or long drive if the run comes off; and a run coming off is a matter of scent nine times out of ten, and last Saturday's experiences proved no exception to the rule. No one could affirm that a fox hadn't a fair chance from Leaden at the first attempt; no one asserts that his egress from Lords was barred; but the majority would admit that there wasn't a yard of scent, and that the huntsman did the wisest thing—getting back to Leaden and on to a fresh fox, but with almost the same result if the varmint hadn't laid up in some roots for hounds to chop him just when the coverts had been cleared and a fine open country lay mapped out before an eager field.

I should like to know the name of that youth who took that roll between Leaden and Lords, for I never saw a handsomer purl or a man come up more smiling and ready for another header into a blind ditch.

That "a Roothing hunter is not made in five minutes" is an aphorism worthy of "The Linkman."

Of course, there was a fox in Garnett's, but he preferred the security of a big rabbit hole to taking his luck in the open.

Shortly after two the route was changed to Canfield Thrift, and there hounds found at once. Breaking the Garnett's side they pottered and dwelt for the first three fields, and most of their followers took it leisurely, far too leisurely, filing after the Master as he led them over an awkward corner to observe what was going on, for all at once hounds got a view, and then for twenty minutes ensued such a scatter and squander as was ne'er witnessed before. The blind fence running down to a small plantation decided your fate. If you held to the right of that plantation you were done, for hounds kept swinging away to the left, and running in view nearly all the way to Olives, went at a terrific pace. Bad luck, Mr. Galloway, to break a leather when you had secured a start. "A narrow squeak that, Giles," said Mr. Newman Gilbey, as he shot up alongside him after getting in and out of an early lane, over a very wide ditch; and hounds were tearing on in front, with the huntsman, Mr. Vickers, and Mr. Seymour Caldwell close to them, and Mr. Price and Captain Tod very handy.

To the right of Olives the fox could be seen on the sky-line near two ash trees; one more rasping fence, a good headland, a squeeze through a gate, and some dozen, out of 150, were galloping downhill in the deep furrowed field alongside hounds, and this little band got a pull at their nags as hounds checked for a moment in the rough fence at the bottom that runs up to the covert. But it was only a momentary respite; just time enough to squeeze through the fence as they took up the line again and commenced the return journey at the same pace they had come out. Bearing a bit to the right, at first towards the railway, they crossed a lane, and then took a sudden swing to the left. A lucky turn for Mr. H. Blyth on his grey, and he assumed a lead which no one could wrest from him until he came a regular crumpler at an extra trappy one into a lane, and the pace was too good to stop to inquire, thought Messrs. Crossman, Caldwell, and Carr, as they took his place, and their fences at the gallop, while hounds tore away towards the Thrift well tailed out by the pace.

Within a few fields of the Thrift hounds hung a bit, and Bailey got to the front again, and our ranks closed up, and a young farmer shot to the front on a four-year-old—the colt's first gallop in the Roothings—(a horse worth buying, if I am not mistaken). A fresh fox, as Bailey made it good

round the Thrift, ran almost into the hounds' jaws. Up and down the ditch they dusted him, taking the gloss off his coat ere, close at his brush, they raced him into the Thrift, to push him through and lose him some fifteen minutes afterwards near Blue Gates, leaving many of us an eighteen-mile hack home, which, in pleasant company, on a sound horse and a mild December evening, has a charm of its own, after a long day in the Roothings.

Rev. G. Maryon Wilson, and Miss Wilson on White Roothing

This group will be readily recognised by all who hunt in the Canfield country. Mr. Maryon Wilson, Rector of Great Canfield, always looked well after Canfield Hart and Wilson Springs during the lifetime of his brother, the late Sir Spencer Maryon Wilson, who owned these world-famed fox preserves, and never allowed the shooting privileges which he enjoyed to interfere with the sport of kings. The Rev. Wilson, as the huntsman Bailey always calls him, to distinguish him from his neighbour, Mr. John Wilson, of New Hall, High Roding, who

was an equally good friend to fox hunting, like most parsons, has been and still is a very good man across country ; and where he went his daughter could follow when mounted on the well-known pony, "White Roothing." Originally the property of Mr. Bevan "White Roothing" was sold by him to Mr. Roffey, who passed it on to his brother-in-law, the late Mr. J. Walmsley, who sold it to Mr. Charles Green, during the latter's Mastership of the Hounds, when it carried his second whip ; eventually the pony passed into Mr. Wilson's hands when Mr. Green's stud was disposed of on his resignation of the Mastership of the E. H.

Among those out this day were : Mrs. Bowlby, Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. Guy Gilbey (on wheels ; we all hope that we shall soon see him in the saddle again), Mr. E. A. Ball, Mr. Greville Bevan, Mr. F. Barclay, Mr. and Mrs. Barron, Mr. H. W. Blyth, Mr. R. Blyth, Miss Blyth, Mr. C. H. Carr, Mr. T. Christy, Mr. Weston Crocker, Mr. D. Crossman, Rev. L. Capel-Cure, Miss Capel-Cure, Mr. Capel-Cure, Mr. Nevill Dawson, Mr. P. M. Evans, Mr. Caton, Mr. Galloway, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. Tresham Gilbey, Miss Gilbey, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Gold, Mr. Giles, Miss A. Gold, Mr. Hollebone, Mr. T. R. Hull, Mr. H. E. Jones, Mrs. Neill, Mr. E. Pelly, Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. Walter Ridley, Mr. H. Savill, Mr. G. Sewell, Mr. Steele, Miss Steele, and Mr. Steele, junr., Mr. A. Waters, Rev. S. Maryon Wilson, Miss Maryon Wilson, Capt. Tod, Mr. Willett, Mr. Vickers.

Mr. and Mrs. Docwra gave a hunt breakfast at the Bower, Havering, on Monday, December 5th. This and the prospect of good sport brought together a bumper meet. At the conclusion of one of the best hunt breakfasts ever offered to hunting men in Essex, Mr. C. E. Green, in the absence of the Master, proposed Mr. Docwra's health, in a few felicitous terms, a toast which was received with considerable enthusiasm by those who had partaken of the excellent champagne repast. The guests included : Colonel Lockwood, M.P., Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Mr. F. Green, Miss M. Green, Mrs. Waters, Colonel and Mrs. Fane, Mrs. Wellesley Pigott, Miss Jones, the Misses Morgan, Mrs. Crossman, Miss Chisenhale Marsh, Mr. and Mrs. Howel J. Price, Mr. Pemberton-Barnes, M.F.H., Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. John White, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. Avila, Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. Fitch (of Romford), Mr. F. G. Barclay, Mrs. Barron, Mrs. Bennett, and her pretty little daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Cockett, Mr. James Christy, Mr. Craig, Mr. A. Flint, Mr. D. Gregory, Mr. Hollebone, Mr. Horner, Mr. T. R. Hull, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. G. Lobb, Mr. H. W. Lee, Mr. Baber, Mr. Seal, his young nephew (on a very sporting pony), Mr. H. B. Michell, Mr. Raphael, Mr. C. Savill, Mr. A. T. Sewell, Mr. Drummond Cunliffe Smith, and others. The hunt servants, too, came in for a most excellent breakfast, and the members of Mr. Docwra's family looked so well after every one—(we were glad to see Miss Docwra on her favourite grey, and her brother taking part in the sport afterwards)—that sandwiches and hunt flasks were unnecessary *impedimenta*.

There was a fox in the gorse near Bower Wood, but not scent enough for hounds to drive him from the home coverts, or force another out from Mrs. McIntosh's broom—though on the latter attempt some half-hour was spent, and some excitement aroused by someone holloaing a cat—was it you, Mr. Smith ?—over a ride.

Not a yard of scent was the general verdict, but I still clung to the

Smith's Wood, below Bower Wood

belief that hounds might run, for the air was warm and the ground wet enough for scenting conditions.

Arriving at the Colonel's coverts, Mr. Avila had only just time to exchange his three-year-old for Mrs. Pigott's second horse, that required a lesson across country, when Jack's scream of "Gone away!" at the bottom of Crane's Wood came floating up wind. Hounds ran at a great pace, *sans* huntsman. He went out at the bottom end of the covert, and Jenkins followed him to Apes Grove, Mr. Ford Barclay finding *en route* that a fence over which Mrs. Crossman's thoroughbred, "Ruth," had flown like a bird, was not so easy as it looked. Breaking the south side of Apes Grove the fox crossed the river half a mile from the ford, and getting on the grass ran clean out of sight, and the question is whether we should ever have caught them had they not checked a field from Barbers. The two ploughmen who pointed out the line hounds had taken could have been the only ones who extracted any fun out of this stern chase for it was too fine a country to ride over without hounds, and so thought Jenkins, as he whipped round at a couple of fences, and would have tried it on again at that last one if he hadn't just caught a glimpse of his favourites in time. At 2.30 I left them trotting back to the Osiers at Passingford Bridge—"To run or not to run," a question to be answered later.

Left Behind.

None but the enthusiastic foxhunter can fully grasp the full significance of the sentence comprised in the two words "*left behind*." Few indeed of the ardent followers of the chase who have not at some time or other in their hunting career felt all that is conveyed in those fatal words, "*left behind*," but from this latter fact consolation may be had. For even a huntsman, with a free hand to gallop through or round a covert with his hounds, is occasionally caught napping; though methinks you shall count on the fingers of one hand the number of times in Bailey's long hunting career that hounds—*the Puckeridge not excepted*—have left him in the lurch.

So let us who were dished on Monday, December 5th, when hounds got away from everyone, except Mr. Tyndale White, in a rattling afternoon run from Curtis Mill Green to the Osiers at Bourne Bridge, and again when they gave us the slip on Wednesday, December 7th, take heart of grace, and hope for better luck next time. But 'tis with the latter date—Wednesday, December 7th—that I am more personally concerned, for once again I experienced to the full the doubt, uncertainty, chagrin, and despair—a nightmare from which there was to be no awakening—of being left behind, and completely out of one of the best runs of this prolific season of 1897-'98 which the Essex Hounds have placed to their credit.

Briefly the tale may be told. Wednesday was no morning for feather-bed sportsmen to turn out; for the day broke in a deluge of rain, which, as the morning wore on, showed no signs of abating. "A nice rain, sir!" was Jack's cheery greeting at the meet at Little Laver Mill, and "a nice rain" I repeated to everyone I met. And so it was for the East London Water Company and the followers of the Essex Hounds, for the ditches were filling, and the chief obstacle to a straight and good thing across the Roothings of Essex was as rapidly disappearing, for most foxes, even Roothingers, prefer the tortuous maze of dry ditches to the centre track of a twenty-acre ploughed field. A small, hardly recognisable field—so be-mackintoshed, be-aproned, and waterproofed were they—moved on with the hounds for Norwood. Their names you shall have, as far as their muffled attire will permit of identification: The Master, Mr. Loftus W. Arkwright—no mackintosh disfigured or hampered his neat, lithe figure as

he sat easily on one of his well-bred hunters. Our ex-Master, in habiliment rarely seen, mackintosh of length—hue no longer white—that must have done service in past days on the flags.

Roly, in his wonderful agricolas or agropholos, warranted to keep your knees dry and add seven pounds to your weight; Mr. F. Green, in coat of pink to match his cheeks—he hunted long before nursing aprons were invented; Miss F. Green, in habit neat; and Miss Buxton equally defying the elements; Mr. and Mrs. Weston Crocker, and Miss Georgie Waters, on her long-tailed black, in waterproof becoming of slaty hue; Miss E. Quare, Miss E. Jones, Mr. D. Crossman, drab all but the hands (such gloves must have been hand-knitted); his soldier brother-in-law, Mr. Dawson; then Mr. Giles, Mr. John White, Mr. Howard, Mr. George Brown, Mr. Marriage, jun., the Admiral, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. C. E. Ridley, drab, all drab, as drab as they could be.

Norwood

Pluvius-defying came Georgie Dawson; Mr. Head, of Canadian renown; Mr. Waters, Mr. Caton, in neat black or grey hunting coats. In pink, full pink, Mr. Vickers; hidden pink, Mr. Jones, on the "Colonel;" Mr. Newman Gilbey on "Cedric."

To Norwood, I said. We never reached it. Hounds were laid on at the gallop to a holloa near Envilles, and a pretty line was worked forward and eked out past Little Laver Hall to Brick Kilns. And later, a leash of foxes were roused in Man Wood, and a run began that the season shall hardly see equalled. Breaking the White Roothing side of Man Wood, four—and four only—Mr. Jones, Miss E. Jones, Mr. F. Green, and Mr. George Brown, of Bobbingworth Hall Farm—got away on terms with hounds, and the advantage they gained at the start they never lost to the

finish. First to catch them ere they reached Rookwood Hall came the huntsman, the Master, and Mr. Giles. At splitting pace hounds ran on for Bird Hatch, not touching Brick Kilns or Norwood in their flight, and the country was dotted in all directions with those that had been left behind.

A stern chase is a long chase, but 'tis the only way to make sure of ever recovering hounds, and the reward came at the check at Bird Hatch, to all those who rode the line and took the fences where the needle had been threaded—and the pattern wove. From Bird Hatch they ran on at a good hunting pace past Waples Mill, swung to the left by Garnish Hall, and lost their fox just under Leaden Roothing's dark hanging woods, into which he was afterwards viewed by Mr. Waters, dead beat. Time, about forty-five minutes. All this we learnt from the smiling throng who came trotting

Running for Brick Kilns

back behind the hounds *en route* to tap Man Wood again, and amongst them, in addition to names already mentioned, were Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. Crossman, and his brother-in-law, Mr. Dawson, who was carried most brilliantly on a wonderful pony; Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. E. Pelly, Mr. G. H. Lee, Miss Buxton, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. Howard, Mr. F. Green, Mr. S. Green, the latter with muddy hat and still muddier coat.

The cream of this run was undoubtedly the piping burst to Bird Hatch, for by the time it was over the fruit had been gathered, and the tale had been told by those who were fortunate enough to get away with or overhaul the hounds soon after the start.

The only consolation I was able to offer the fellow sportsmen whom I met in search of hounds was that the pack had probably, after the run of the season, eaten their fox and gone home. That indeed would have

added the finishing touch to a chapter of misfortunes. To return home, not knowing what had become of hounds, imagining you had missed the run of a century, then do justice to your dinner, would have shown you to be the happy possessor of a temperament which even a phlegmatic Boer might have envied.

We were spared putting our philosophy to that test. Mr. Tilling, Mr. Dawson, Mr. Bevan, Mr. Ridley, Miss ——, Miss ——, Mrs. ——, were we not? Excuse my mentioning names, I know you don't like it.

When we found a fox in the roots near Matching Park at 3 p.m. we had, thanks to a clear sky, a considerable addition to our morning field, including Mr., Mrs. and Miss Bowlby, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ball, Rev. Austin Oliver, Mr. L. Pelly and Miss Steele, just enough to put new life and add a new zest to the consolation hunt from Matching Park, which the fox from the roots so considerately gave us, not unmarked by incident approaching the alarming when Mr. Head, master of the Canadian Wolf Hounds, pulled in by the horse's bridle, to which he clung valiantly, disappeared under water in the same pond where a valuable horse of Mr. Price's looked like finding a watery grave.

All's well that ends well, and a hot bath for the one and some good linseed gruel for the other would put things ship-shape, we hope.

Running by Mr. Symes, High Laver, hounds swung round High Laver Hall, and hunted well up to Brick Kilns, and were whipped off in the dark at Man Wood, after a real good but tiring day for horses.

I can tell you of half-a-day in the Blackmore High Woods on Monday, *December 12th*, when, in spite of blustering wind and a flashy scent, hounds brought a fox to book that had never sought safety in the open, and a promising run in the direction of Roxwell was nipped in the bud by a drain; not before Georgie Dawson had played the kind Samaritan and gone to the rescue of Jack, who was temporarily placed *hors de combat* by a fall out of an early road.

Not finding in Lady Grove, in company with several other members of the one-horse brigade, we set out on the 14-mile track home, and reached it ere the dark granite on the road became indistinguishable on a short December's day.

Wednesday, December 14th, at Tyler's Cross, was a day to be remembered by all those who played the game, and played it fairly, on the grass fields that link Parndon Woods to the Forest in the $5\frac{1}{2}$-mile point hounds made in forty minutes, ere they marked their fox to ground.

Saturday following found no cavillers at the big ring of forty odd minutes over the Roothings from Row Wood.

And Monday last provided a day's sport that went to prove that Essex foxes are not degenerating, or surely no unbroken line could have been held from the Lower Forest to Belgium Springs in the afternoon gallop. Unluckily, the day brought disaster to one of our most forward and most modest riders* in the loss of a valuable hunter, but the universal sympathy extended to him should, methinks, make some amends for an experience that everyone who hunts must, at some time or other, pass through, and for which the rider is rarely to blame.

Tuesday night we dreamt of skating, and woke up to find the country ridable; and later on a bumper meet at Epping Green, Mrs. Wythes, Sir Fowell Buxton, and Mr. Victor Buxton making their first appearance in the hunting field this season.

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* John White.

'Tis hard luck not finding foxes in your coverts when you have taken the trouble to preserve them, must have been in the mind of the owner of the Copped Hall coverts as one after the other was drawn blank; but that they are there we have too many shooters' testimony to doubt. But foxes like quiet, and a covert shot through a week before it is drawn is generally tenantless when it is tried.

But we were in for no blank day, and before the night fell the large field that had assembled in the morning had galloped and jumped to their heart's content, and only ten were left to tell the tale: Mr. Arkwright, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. F. Green and his son, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. F. Barclay, Mr. G. Buxton, and Messrs. W. and A. Sewell.

The same old story. Galley Hill foxes scoring all the tricks in a rubber with Bailey and his dogs. Two packs and a rising moon, methinks, before Bailey shall call four by honors, and sleep in peace after a Galley Hill day.

The game commenced at 1.30 with a rattling lead from Obelisk Wood, and did not finish before 4 p.m., when it was too dark to see the pips, and Bailey lost hand after hand as the game went on, no matter how he shuffled and dealt. All went against him, but the onlookers had some fun as they followed the play.

But from Obelisk Wood to Galley Hill they had to gallop to see it; Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Mr. Giles, with the Master, and one or two others with quick horses, occupying the front row; Mr. Jones and Mr. Tyndale White flipping over a tempting lean-away gate in their keenness not to be left behind as hounds ran through the spinney short of Galley Hills.

From here the play became so intricate that the mildest and most soothing cigar did not help to unravel its mysteries or solve its problems.

Boxing-day.

Not often can the hunting man follow his favourite pastime on this annual festival: generally is he called upon to risk his limbs on skates, or watch the gliding throng that recklessly courts disaster on the treacherous ice which he is too timid to venture upon.

So let it be written in red letters—a Boxing-day that may be enjoyed in a pink coat.

Each fashionable hunt in the kingdom has—nay, must have—its own special rendezvous for a Boxing-day meet, with its large attendant crowd, and the further such trysting place is away from a railway station the better it adapts itself for this particular festival.

Blackmore has no rivals as a rendezvous for a Boxing-day meet, for in the limitless woodlands, with their interminable rides with which its name is so closely associated, even a Bank Holiday crowd is soon swallowed up. Boxing-day of 1898 witnessed a big gathering at Blackmore. Foot people in crowds, ready to who-oop and holloa if a mouse broke covert. Boys in shoals, on ponies, clipped, or unclipped, fiery, untamed, or quiet as sheep, it mattered not what they bestrode; eager enthusiasm was written on their rosy faces, for was it not for many their first hunt, and for most the exchange of a hard bench for the yielding pig-skin—and the swing of a hunting crop in lieu of a steel pen.

Cyclists and carriages of every description in motley array.

Outside the High Woods they found a fox, and rattled him across half-a-dozen fields or more to Thoby Wood at such a pace that when they shortly afterwards brought him to book we hugged ourselves in the vain delusion that there was a burning scent in spite of the blue mist and flashy wind that came up in angry puffs from the south.

Short as the spin was it afforded ocular demonstration that there were a lot of young bloods out who meant having their day, and who did not intend to be baulked of a single fence.

One brown-coated gentleman,* fresh from Klondyke, leading into trouble, I am afraid, from the easy way (he had a lot of steam on) his dark chesnut whisked over a hairy chasm near Thoby Wood, a lady who knows no fear, her black cutting it in her last stride.

Up Thoby Wood side we galloped: half-a-dozen hounds coming out on a hot scent, while the body of the pack rattled their hunted fox round the covert. We ought to have been left behind—Mr. Carr, Mrs. Waters, Mrs. Fane, don't you agree?—for taking the outside circle of that big wood in-

Thoby Wood and Priory

stead of bisecting it with the huntsmen—e'en though the rides were deep and muddy—and we were lucky, you'll admit, in finding the pack still running their fox in a neighbouring covert, when there might have been a mile of open country between us and the top of the hunt, and hearing, in company with other good holiday folk, the who-oop as hounds ran into their quarry.

From the same wood they were away again with a catchy scent, and held a line over as trappy and hairy a country as it was possible to find or disagreeable to ride over, on a hot pulling horse, with a pony in every gap, and someone down at every ditch. Quite worthy of Barnum's or Astley's was the recovery of a gentleman on a black cob, as he jumped into the road over a most gruesome ditch, and appeared sitting on the animal's tail. By a series of spasmodic efforts and a liberal use of the bridle, he got back

* Mr. Sheppard.

in the pigskin again, and galloped on looking for something equally difficult.

One at a time at most places, and someone wanting to Kodak someone else, who had cut in with a *sang froid* that left nothing to be desired, except the naughty little– word ——.

After this a general adjournment to Truelove's for refreshments. Result: Two men, two very first flighters,† who are never left behind, might have been greatly missed had hounds found in some of the outlying coverts adjoining the High Woods. The one in pink, to make amends, stuck very religiously to the huntsman after that, and promised, when I said adieu to him at 2.30, still keeping his eye on the drawing pack, to send me the account of the run of the season, should it come off on Boxing-day after all. Fortune did not favour the brave, the persevering, or the fair.

The names, if you will, of a few of those who kept Boxing-day in the only way it ought to be kept in the midst of a hunting neighbourhood:— Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. Tyndale-White and his two sons, Mr. F. Green, Miss Green, Mr. and Mrs. Waters, Colonel and Mrs. Fane, Colonel Lockwood, M.P., Mr. Usborne, M.P., and the Misses Usborne, Mr. David Christy, Mr. T. Christy, Mr. J. Christy, Mr. Marriage, Mr. and Mrs. F. Ball, Mr. E. Ball, Mr. W. Ball, Messrs. Sheppard, Mrs. E. Sheppard, Captain Tufnell, Mr. T. R. Hull and his son, Mr. H. E. Jones, Miss Jones, Mr. Seymour Caldwell, Mr. H. J. Price, Miss Morgan, Mr. Craig, Mr. Sheffield Neave, M.S.H., Mr. Seal, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. and Mrs. D. Crossman, Mrs. Neill.

BENTLEY MILL.

Sport with the Essex Hounds has been of a very mediocre description for the last two weeks, and trying to describe it is very much like endeavouring to turn out bricks without straw; but with the advent of the New Year has come, let us hope, a turn in the tide. Certainly last Monday's record—the very first possible day's hunting in 1899—stands out as something quite beyond the common average.

The day did not commence in a very inviting manner, though better far than the white pall of fog that hung over the country, blotting out the landscape at the birth of the New Year, until melted and dissolved by sheets of rain; for although most of us who had any distance to hack or drive to the meet were caught in a drenching shower of rain and sleet—fit accompaniment of the searching wind that drove it up from the Atlantic—yet by the time the tryst was reached the clouds were breaking, and a winter's sun was paling the blue vault of heaven, making the spray upon every hedgerow glisten and sparkle in its rays.

Not that hunting men, as a rule, are deterred by stress of weather, for full well they know that hounds have been known to run desperately hard in a gale of wind and out-distance all pursuit when March dust has fairly hidden the flying pack.

With a nip of frost in the air, following a spell of mild, showery weather, when days are at their shortest, most men would sally out to try their luck if they had a horse in their stables half fit to go.

Monday, then, brought a bumper meet. How I hated myself for being late. The hounds had pretty well finished drawing the Moors before I arrived on the scene, to see those who had followed the huntsman on his roan through the woods, coming over the bank after him into the road. Mr. R. Cunliffe-Smith's horse gave a bound prodigious, a hat-guard tester, as his topper blew off. Miss Jones's horse jumped off the bank most

† Mr. D. Crossman and Mr. S. Caldwell.

beautifully, letting itself down with the agility and cleverness of a cat. The collection of ponies, cobs, &c., that came following after there was no time to stay and note, for Bailey was losing no time this good scenting day, getting forward to the next covert—the High Woods—Mr. Christopher Tower's preserves—where a fox had been harboured.

We took close order in that road ten abreast, and the line extended rearwards 80 to 100 yards. 'Tis too late, I am afraid, to adorn Jenkin's, Peter's or Joseph's tails with gaudy ribbon: they are too well-known as non-kickers, otherwise it is a very useful appendage in a crowd, and affords a very good excuse for edging up to the front. Here the question arises, ought those who ride kicking horses to occupy the front or back seats when a covert is drawn? As a rule, a kicking horse is a good one belonging to a good sportsman; therefore I give my vote for putting the kickers in front, subject to one penalty—they must make a hole in the first nasty fence that requires boring.

W. H. Baddeley on "Magic"

A pony that carried his son four seasons without a fall. Mr. Baddeley's favourite hunter, however, was "Little Jack," formerly the property of Mr. Hoare. This well bred little animal, which only stood 15 hands, carried Mr. Baddeley one day

a week regularly for four seasons at the cost of two falls, and was about the cleverest and easiest jumper he ever sat on. Having broken down badly at exercise during the long frost of '95, he gave him to Mr. Avila, of Theydon, who patched him up sufficiently to come in second for the Farmers' Plate at Harlow Races of the same year, carring 13 stone, at which time he must have been 20 years old. Mr. Baddeley generally rides little horses, but they can all gallop and jump. The Saturday meets being generally too distant for Mr. Baddeley, he keeps himself in condition by a gallop through the Forest with Paper and Drag. Mr. Baddeley can use a pencil as well as handle the reins, and I have to thank him for the sketch of a meet at Copped Hall Lodge Gates, page 126, vol. I.

P. M. Evans on "Katie"

A capital sportsman in every sense of the word. Hunting, shooting, polo, cricket, hockey, or tennis, nothing comes amiss to him; he is a good man at any of them. The mare he rides, a great favourite, for which he gave a century, is as quick

across a country as her master. Go slow at your fences and she will very soon put you down, and don't accept a mount on her unless your nerve is as good as her owner's. Mr. Evans would just as soon ride over a big fence or a succession of big fences in cold blood as when hounds are running. His motto, when it comes to jumping, is *Toujours prêt.*

Hounds hadn't been a minute in covert before over the road came the fox, speeded on his journey by a chorus of holloas, and followed by the hounds like a torrent as they swept after him to a burning scent, and swung back as quickly as the fox recrossed the road to the High Woods again.

How they rattled him through it quicker far than you could pick your way through the thick green undergrowth of briar, or make way over the wire netting that spanned the ride, or jump out of the covert and gallop the headland, up which already those who had never gone into the covert were coming along with a wet sail.

Hounds streaming along two fields in front of every one, and so, at hottest pace, towards Weald Church, and down the steep hill at the gallop to take the open 100 yards lower. Hounds well ahead of most of the field, running hotly towards Brentwood—Mr. Seymour Caldwell a bit closer to them than anyone else—to swing down to the brook to tempt Mr. Tyndale White and one or two others over, and then to bear away again up hill as hard as they could go, fence succeeding fence. A momentary check in a lane, where thirty of us got to hounds again by taking our turn over a trappy ditch; but once more hounds got away very quickly from most of their followers.

Back to the High Woods, through these like lightning they forced their fox. Up the wood side (decidedly the best line this time), with hounds swinging away right-handed through a farm-yard, the nearest cut, every horse being sent along for all it was worth. Mrs. Alexander, on a very fast one, passing most between the fences. Shortly afterwards a slide down a bank as steep as the roof of a house, which crumbled as you slid, with your horse up to his hocks in the loamy soil. Lucky when your turn came with hounds every second getting further and further away. Let a lady come: the exclamator being quite ready to slide after her. After you, sir! Now let Mrs. Clark go. Let Mrs. Barron go. Let me go. Let us all go. This trap for the unwary (on Mr. Garrod's farm, I am told), the first six to come at it having a visible pull of the thirty who followed; but not such a nick as Mr. Tyndale White and one or two more, who, a bit lower down, had two awkward fences in lieu of it, and landed bang on the hounds' backs, and couldn't be caught again for some time.

Down another tail end of a lane, was it after the rough grass and small fir-tree planted enclosure, gated each end, through which we galloped in single file? I fancy so, but no doubt about Sir Evelyn Wood being there, looking glowing and happy, taking the country again out of the next road with the first six. The field well tailed out at this period, for over some big grass fields hounds were fairly racing. The huntsman's roan could be seen leading the van. A slight hover at Noak Hill road, Mr. Charles Green there at the right moment with a "Hold hard; give them time," and Mr. Waltham's hand up on the left, and hounds picking it up again on the plough. Note, we were getting deeper and deeper into the ploughed country, the fox was sinking, and hounds were called upon to hunt, which they did most beautifully.

Up the side of one of the Dagenham coverts after Colonel Fane. Hounds brushed across our front, and ran straight for Navestock Common. Was it not here that one of the most popular members * of our Hunt had the cruel misfortune to kill a good horse? Truly, if real universal sympathy would have mended matters, the loser might soon have forgotten his loss, for I never heard more genuine sympathy expressed on any other similar occasion.

It looked now as if our fox meant Navestock Heath, and if he had set his mask in that direction a very awkward brook would have weeded out all the indifferent riders and their steeds; but, considerately he coasted it.

A succession of most trappy fences, which Mr. Waltham and Mr. Harry Sworder fairly seemed to revel in, had to be negotiated by all those riding the line. We were nearing the end, for Mr. Waltham got a view of the fox toiling along, towards Pyrgo Wood, well nigh spent. Five minutes later hounds were rattling him round that covert to his death.

The wind blew keenly and icily after the hot gallop upon the lathering horses, as drawn up at the covert side, they were kept for another ten minutes ere this good fox succumbed—55 minutes altogether—forty-five in the open and no time lost if you will glance at your map. Stiff as a board, you could see at a glance, as the huntsman triumphantly held him aloft, before blooding Mr. Harry Sworder's boy and another young Nimrod, making them sworn fox-hunters for life. This run was full of incidents, but there was little time to note them. If you rode religiously the line hounds ran, you had all your work cut out to steer your horse and keep clear of other people, as fences came one after the other. I should say about thirty stuck to the line of hounds all through—Mr. Sims Horner certainly one of them—and their horses had had quite enough by the time it was all over. I would also affirm that for the greater part of the run hounds had the best of it. I would further assert, fearless of contradiction, that the huntsman, on his roan, was not beaten by any one, and I am equally certain that no man, woman, or child was in the same field with hounds from start to finish. Roads and lanes were freely used, or not a tithe of those who appeared on the scene when the fox was broken up would have witnessed the ceremony. What do you say, Master Arthur Thomas? You came up spick and span, and I think, remarked that you had hardly jumped a fence in this old fashioned, truly enjoyable run.

Mr. Seymour Caldwell had a curious experience in the middle of the run, for jumping out of a wood, through a very thick fence, he found himself hanging up in the boughs, and his horse getting over without him. Unfortunately a very pretty diamond pin, given him as a racing souvenir by Lady Warwick, was lost ere he regained *terra firma*. Mr. Raphael would never be able to wear his concertina'd hat again, I am sure. Mr. Fitch, of Romford, was riding as hard at the finish as he was at the beginning, in spite of a real good toss. Mr. Avila was grassed by a hidden strand of barbed wire, a boggy ditch claimed one of our bravest and fairest, and a hidden strand of barbed danger was flown by the priceless black, while, instead of a glove, a lady's hat was borne by one who, if he succeeded in keeping its fair owner in view, saw as much of the run as anyone else.

They drew the Green: Curtis Mill Green blank. A brace they found in Sir Charles Smith's coverts, one getting to ground a mile away in a drain of Mr. Sam Crane's; and at 3 p.m., in company with the young

* Mr. H. J. Price.

Haileyburian, I left them running a good fox of Colonel Lockwood's in the direction of Stapleford, snatching a run, almost as good as the last, from the south-westerly gale that came lashing up, ere the sun had set.

The Colonel's fox that I left hounds running on the afternoon of the good Monday's sport from Bentley Mill gave his pursuers two very enjoyable hours' sport, and beat hounds at every turn.

'Tis a curious thing to find yourself at Gaynes Park and the Lower Forest from a Fyfield meet; but such, I am told, befel all those who followed the fortunes of the Essex Hounds last Wednesday week. What they actually did I have only hearsay to go by, for on that particular occasion I was having a day with the South Wilts,* and was lucky enough to drop in for rather a good thing, and found twenty years' experience over

Barbers

Essex banks a very good training for the class of fences we encountered; for the only safe way to cross a Wiltshire or Dorsetshire double is to go at it slowly, and leave a lot to your horse—shut your eyes and chuck the reins on his neck if he is a clever one. The owner of the animal† I was lucky enough to ride assured me that I could not possibly get him down. He credited me, however, with being a better horseman than I can lay claim to, but I was afterwards assured that the South Wilts Hunt will have a clear gap over a certain brook-guarded fence for the rest of the season, which will be very useful to them in an emergency. The first fox we found, within half-a-mile of the meet, led us a nice dance for fifty-seven

* The Master of the South Wilts, Mr. Percy Browne, volunteered with his Yeomanry Troop for the Transvaal War.—Ed.

† Subsequently this horse proved to be an equally good conveyance with the Quorn, and on one occasion stuck up the field over a brook place that had to be done in two jumps.—Ed.

minutes over a most delightfully sporting country, up hill and down dale, all grass, every yard of it, and no wire to stop you, considerately running through the grounds of the house I was staying in before Jack Stratton finally handled him.

I must confess, however, that I think that old Bailey would have brushed him very much sooner. Jack Stratton leaves a good deal to his hounds—a good deal more, in fact, than Joe Moss, the huntsman to a neighbouring pack—Lord Portman's; who, report has it, can kill a fox when he likes, and will mop up three to Stratton's one. A nice spurt in the middle of the day, winding up with two hours over the vale, taking in part of Lord Portman's country, brought a very enjoyable day to a close.

On Friday, the 6th, the Essex had another good day, followed by a Saturday at Good Easter, that has left something to be remembered and

Good Easter

talked about for many a long day by those who were fortunate enough to be out; for, as General Sir Evelyn Wood remarked to me on Monday last, it was perfect bliss while it lasted, and, with a six-mile point in thirty-seven minutes, I quite believe him just as much as I accept, without any demur, the statement of a very thrusting welter that, on a young horse, the pace was just a leetle too ultra for him. The country rode heavy after the recent rains, and every field claimed some sobbing steed. Sir Evelyn, however, saw every yard of the run, and Mr. Charles Green, I am told, was one of the very select few who struggled to the end, and who has his own theory of what became of that fox—eaten, he was not.

Now it is a remarkable thing once more illustrating the vagaries of scent that, while the Essex hounds could run like distraction over their Roothing country, Mr. Quare's Harriers could do next to nothing on the

grass on the southern borders of the county—though I fancy one hare had a very narrow squeak, which hounds ran three times round one of my fields just as, like the Baron in the fable, I had called for my boots preparatory to sallying out for a ride after luncheon. They do say—but who said it, I must leave you to guess for yourselves—that it was no hare that brought harriers to the outskirts of a country town, but that a very fine specimen of the vulpine race was found in the open on one of the farms on the Copped Hall Estate, and taught a lesson in getting away from hounds which may stand him in good stead on some future occasion.

I now come to Monday, a day that we cannot compare with its predecessor, for scent was against us; but all the same we had a very pleasant day's sport, and a very pleasant day in the open, for the sun shone out of a cloudless sky, reminding one more of a day in early spring than mid-winter, and all who came to the meet at Myless Lodge looked as if they had come on pleasure bent.

Mrs. Wythes drove all the way from Copped Hall—a banking country having no terrors for her, in spite of having been brought up in a flying one with its stiff upstanding fences. Essex is a very trappy country, full of pitfalls, but very easy after the Belvoir Vale. Mr. Charles Green's eagle eye detected a fox stealing out of some cabbages on land in Mr. Tyndale White's preservation, and, taking us over the Stondon road, we had some of the point-to-point fences before we reached Thoby Wood, where we lost this fox. A very delightful country to ride over, but not a nice one to be left behind in. What do you say, Mr. Ford?* We were both in the same boat, you know.

A longish draw from this point through all the Kelvedon and Dudbrook coverts, with the prospect of a certainty at the Osiers—Sir Charles Smith's. How glossy the varmint looked as he came away in full view of us all, and tacked across Albyns Park, and after providing us with a good long, muddy gallop up to and round Curtis Mill Green, afforded the opportunity before he was lost of showing how very easy it is when you seek for an easier place in a fence to get left behind. Seeking an easier place in a fence when hounds turned back from the Green towards Bishop's Hall, I soon found myself in company—very good company, too, Mr. Waltham, Mr. Steele, Mr. Raphael, Mr. Savill; you'll admit this is not personal; and we hadn't a timber jumper between us when we came to the railed-up lane, and Mrs. Bennett put us all to the blush as she flew over. 'Tis true, Mr. Savill, you rode at those rails several times; they bent and they cracked, but break they would not, and we left you still at them when we turned ignominiously away—is not confession good for the soul?—only to get wired up, and to see Mr. Waltham in a bird cage, and hounds a mile away, and not recovered until they checked in Crane's Wood, by which time the fun was all over, though hounds held a line over the river to Shalesmore, bringing some of us two miles nearer home, a thing to be grateful for.

I ought to have mentioned that Bailey was laid up with one of his annual colds, and that in his enforced absence Jack carried the horn in a very efficient manner. *Even a huntsman is not exempt from colds*—only, in fact, those lucky individuals who, according to a writer in last week's *Spectator*, can travel like Nansen in lands where there are no colds to catch. Did not he get a bad one the moment he reached the confines of civilisation, with its millions of hungry microbes?

* Mr. Ford Barclay got down here. I lost a leather and I had to help F. B. to remount.—Ed.

Hunting away from home the day after the County Ball at Shaftesbury, I renewed my acquaintance with the Wiltshire and Dorsetshire doubles. On the same day the Essex Hounds had an eventful run from Latton Park to the Ongar Park country, and hounds were running well, as they generally do before a frost in nearly every county in England. To return to my day with the South Wilts and the breakfast meet at Pyt House. We had a big gathering of the clans on that occasion, including many soldiers, one of whom during the day had the bad luck to break his horse's back just in front of me. He had the animal shot at once, without consulting the

Miss Amy Beatrix Harenc on "Robin"

owner or a vet., and I am told that if you hire a horse and break its back, you may be held responsible for its loss, even if its back is broken—unless the actual owner has given his consent, or a vet. is present. If this is so, it would be rather hard upon the wretched horse to have to wait for its owner's consent, or a vet.'s sanction, to put an end to its sufferings.

Throwing off late, hounds did not get on to a fox before 2·15; but when they did they hunted on with few checks till 5 p.m., by which time only a dozen were left out of a large field. Why did you go home, Mr. Mason, and miss the best bit of the lot when, running at hot pace on the grass over a very delightful country, hounds marked their fox to ground in the Blackmore Vale country?—the two Miss Grosvenors, Colonel Mansel,

Colonel Paget, C.B., Mr. F. Farquharson, and Mr. Neil Harenc and Miss B. Harenc, being among the dozen who saw the finish.

Contrasting sport in that part of the world with what one sees in Essex, one can hardly fail to notice how many more farmers hunt in Dorsetshire than Essex, or experience how much easier it is to hire a good horse for an odd day.

Last Monday it blew half a gale when we met at Bentley Mill, and the sun was getting low in the heavens before we found a fox—a real wild customer—in Curtis Mill Green, and ran him slowly and with scent indifferent nearly to Ongar Park, enough to warm us and send us all home cheerful and happy, and fencing sufficient to show that the popular Major (Major Wilson was paying a visit to the old country) hadn't forgotten the art of getting across any obstacle a bit quicker than most civilians.

Running past Rochetts

No other special incident to recall, unless, perhaps, one of the neatest bits of fencing I have witnessed for many a long day, when Mr. Reginald Cunliffe-Smith, to avoid a long trot up one side of a hedge and down the other (which the rest of the field, following their shepherd, Bailey, were engaged in), charged a very stiff post and rails into a lane, which, at the angle he had to take it, necessitated clearing on the far side some wire netting almost on the same level as the rails, but some feet away from them—a wire and timber double—in fact, a fence that, however well it might have suited a Colonial, would have stuck up a Pytchley or a Quorn field to a man.

One other little incident—one that certainly pleased me—to see Mr. Lawrence Buxton, one of the latest additions to our first flighters, sustaining the Buxton tradition of riding straight to hounds by boring his way through

Leaden Wood

a fence as dark as Erebus, *en route* from the Green to Rose Hall Wood, rather than meekly wait his turn for the gap which the rest of us sought.

The two absorbing topics of conversation in the hunting field on Monday and Tuesday the last week were (1st) the very bad accident which Mrs. Douglas Crossman had the misfortune to sustain hunting with the Essex Hounds the Friday previously, and (2nd) the great day's sport that fell to the lot of those who were at High Easter the following day. With regard to the first, it seems that a hound crossed a man, who was galloping in front of Mrs. Crossman,* down a ploughed field, bringing him and his horse, together with Mrs. Crossman's, to the ground. When she was extricated, it was found that her thigh was badly broken. She was taken to the Saracen's Head, Dunmow. It was very fortunate that such good quarters as the Saracen's Head were so conveniently near, as the landlady, whose late husband, Mr. George Willis, hunted so many years with the Essex Hounds, had had some experience of the requirements of those who have been unlucky enough to be laid up by accidents, for Mr. Willis met with a good many in his lifetime.

With regard to Saturday's sport, I missed, I am told, a chance of making history, for Bailey affirms that 'twas the best scenting day that they had had this season. Two big runs were brought off in the Lords and Leaden country; the first one of which was enough for most, too much for many, and only those who had second horses had a look in for the big run that, commencing at Garnish, swept past Lords and away to Row Wood, without a check, leaving many a big and lusty youth lamenting the avoirdupois, which, however useful it might be to him in a football scrimmage, was more than useless when the lady pack of the Essex Hounds were racing frantically across the big stretching fields of the best ploughed country in England; only one little rift was in the lute to which such a merry tune was danced upon this ever eventful Saturday—the two foxes brought to hand were both found to be mangy.

But people who make high holiday on Saturdays, swear by the Roothings, and never go home contented unless they have had at least one gallop, were not having it quite all their own way, did not quite monopolise all the fun of the fair, for Mr. Quare's Harriers held high revel over Mr. George Hart's demesne upon the same day, accounting for a brace of strong hares with consummate ease, and never giving anyone a chance of seeing any of the fun unless they rode straight to the bustling pack; and ride straight the following did, if I may venture to take liberties with a few names:—Mrs. Wythes, Major and Mrs. Ricardo, Mrs. Waters, Miss M. Yerburgh, Mrs. Pelly, Miss Quare and her sister, Miss M. Buxton, Mr. and Mrs. G. Buxton, Mrs. Redwood, Mr. Horner, Mr. L. Buxton, Capt. Wood, Mr. F. Ball, Mr. W. Sewell, Mr. Rickett, Mr. P. Lee, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. H. Hart, Mr. C. Hart, Mr. Tossetti, Mr. E. Lobb, Mr. G. Brown.

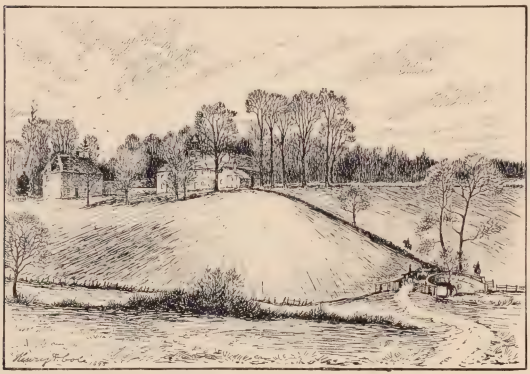
At midday, Mr. H. Hart, who has succeeded his father at Canes Farm, gave a most hospitable welcome to all comers, while his father, if helping to keep some too eager spirits from over-riding hounds, was the first to give them a line over a bit of wheat when the pack were running full cry.

I believe that this season is the sixty-sixth that Mr. George Hart and Mr. Sims Horner have hunted in Essex. It was an honour to be out with two such veterans.

Not many days with Mr. Quare's Harriers have come in my way this season, but I could hardly fail to be surprised at the pace they can go, and fancy that the strongest March hare will have little chance against them.

* Mrs. Crossman made a very rapid recovery, and was present at our Steeplechases on April 6th.

What shall I tell you of Monday—Black Monday, it might well have been called if one would have gauged its character from the despair and disappointment written on all faces as preserve after preserve and covert after covert were drawn blank. Not for me to weary you by dreary detail of the names of all the tenantless preserves; even Courtfield—Col. Fane's famous stronghold—for once disappointed us, and the cabbage field on its outskirts, from which two such good runs have taken place already, failed on this occasion. Methinks I gave someone else the credit for harbouring a Courtfield fox instead of Col. Fane, but anyone may well feel a sense of proprietary interest in a fox that has done you the honour to select your fattest and most marketable chickens. A roving marauder is this Courtfield fox, and he laughs in his sleeve at the Essex Hounds.



Myless Lodge

Rough Talleys, on the borders of Epping Forest, saved the blank, when the approaching night made it too late to be taken advantage of beyond the boundaries of Weald Coppice.

If Monday was bad Tuesday was equally disappointing, and we had such an eager field out too—so many that came to see a run, and meant seeing any run the Essex Hounds could give them; and among those who have survived a season's hunting, escaped the influenza, have not taken flight to the Riviera, or been hurried by Parliamentary duties into an early London season, were: both Masters, Mrs. Bowlby and the Misess Bowlby (three), Mrs. Arkwright, Mr. W. H. Baddeley and his son, Mr. and Mrs. F. Ball, Mr. F. G. Barclay, Mr. and Mrs. Barron, Mr. Basham, Mr. Avila, Mr. Howard, Mr. A. Bowlby, Mrs. Bruce, Mr. and Mrs. G. Buxton, Miss M. Buxton, Mr. L. Buxton, Mr. E. K. Charrington, Mr. E. Cockett, Mr. R. B. Colvin, Mr. Walter Cook, Mr. and Mrs. Weston Crocker, Mr. D. Crossman, Mr. Tresham Gilbey, Mr. N. Gilbey, Mr.

A. B. Giles, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. T. R. Hull, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mrs. Neill, Mr. George Hart, Mr. A. Peel, the Misses Peel (two), Mr. J. G. Pelly, Miss Pelly, Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. Roddick, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Price, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. A. T. Sewell, Mr. A. R. Steele, Miss Steele, Mr. J. Swire, Mr. J. Todhunter, Mrs. and Miss Waters, Mr. John White, Mr. J. Green, General Sir Evelyn Wood, Sir W. Baillie-Hamilton, Mrs. E. J. Wythes, Miss Yerburgh.

The one stirring incident of the day from Barnsleys to Latton—no forest-bred fox, or he would have gone out at the bottom for Canes. On the Latton side he hadn't a chance, you say, Mr. L. B., what with road riders, eager carriage folk, and reckless cyclists. Mark it for future guidance, and take the centre of the wood with hounds, sir! and leave the main road clear, for Harlow Park foxes have a knack of running to Latton. The cyclist who, Mr. Baddeley affirms, yelled at the fox as he came out towards Latton Park ought to have been—I was very nearly adding hung, drawn, and quartered—but ought at the least to have had his tyres attended to. We passed him in Potter Street, getting all he could out of a high gear and the excitement of horses thundering down the road behind him.

Monday was not exactly a day we should have chosen for a mud bath; it was not freezing, certainly, but a keen cutting wind was blowing, which the rays of even a February sun did little to temper; so that the lady* whose horse rolled over with her in Parndon Woods, plastering her from head to foot, showed a great deal of nerve and pluck in sticking to hounds until the day had nearly dragged out its weary course. Only two foxes seen all day. Coming on the top of Monday, does the fruit of Saturday's sport taste as sweet in the mouth as it did on Sunday? I have often been loth to destroy the memories of a really memorable run by going out hunting again for a week or ten days. I have often consoled myself for missing a good one by the reflection—what can it matter a few years hence?

* Mrs. E. J. Wythes.

CHAPTER IX.

Stormer—Mr. Quare and his Harriers—Epping Forest—How to recover Hounds—The success of the Suaviter in modo manner—Epping Town in summer dress—Mr. Quare looks back upon a record season—His success at Peterboro'—The annual meeting at the Green Man, 1899—The Steeplechases at High Roding Bury—Theodore Christy on "Schoolmaster"—Season 1899-1900—Some changes—Cub hunting—A Lion story—Bay's Grove—Record sport in November—Fitz Johns—The Transvaal War—Volunteers for the Front—Our Handy Man—A good run from Galley Hills—Pleshey Mount—Bushetts—The Lawn Meet at Dudbrook—Imperial Yeomanry—Guy Gold, Philip Gold—Audley Blyth, Rupert Blyth of the D.C.O.—Sydney Green—Guy Lobb—Gordon Lobb—Godwin St. John Lobb.

Mr. Quare's Harriers.

WHAT makes Mr. Quare so popular? The question was put to me on Saturday, February 25th, by a man who possesses a keen insight into human nature, and whose profession is constantly calling upon him to give decisions upon the motives that underlie much of the bye-play going on around him on the world's stage; and yet this shrewd observer had to confess that he was unable to solve this apparently simple problem.

One or two reasons I gave him then and there. Before the day was over I could have given him a third, and that one good enough to account for any popularity, and to it I will allude later on—contenting myself with two at the present moment.

(First). Mr. Quare is an enthusiast. He is a born harrier huntsman from the sole of his foot to the crown of the neat velvet cap which so often stands him in good stead when he is boring his way through a scratchy fence. A great lover of hounds, and a great judge of them. He is a most successful breeder, and he has brought the pack, with which the late Mr. Vigne and the present Master of Puckeridge were so closely connected, to the very pink of perfection, and they can not only hunt but can kill their hares faster than most packs. Did they not kill five at Sutton's a week ago (nearly driving the head keeper wild, I am told, at losing so many of his pets).—N.B.—Wright always has liked hares better than foxes.

Another reason. No day is too long for Mr. Quare, no weather too rough, no field too large, no muster too small. From daylight till dark he hunts his pack, and a sportsman every inch of him, he is the *beau idéal* of the farmers, for, if there is one man more than another a farmer esteems, it is a sportsman born and bred, and born and bred a true sportsman is Mr. Quare. Coming of a sturdy yeoman class, owners and occupiers of land for many years in the Roothings of Essex, no man can more fully enter into a farmer's feelings. No man is more ready to study their interests in preventing damage to crops and fences.

The third reason you shall have, as I promised, by-and-bye. It had been whispered abroad, and the secret lost none of its force in the constant repetition, that some of the wild forest foxes were to be bolted from some of the forest strongholds on Saturday last—subsequent to a meet at Birch Hall, Mr. Gerald Buxton's house on the forest borders. No wonder, then, that such a large assemblage came together to see the fun: Sir T. Fowell Buxton and Miss Buxton, Miss T. Buxton, Mrs. Clarke, Mrs. Redwood, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Miss Pelly, Major Ricardo, Capt. Wood, Mr. Gregory, Mr. H. Sworder, Messrs. W. and A. Sewell, Miss Marjorie Sewell, Mr. Tossetti, Mrs. Bennett's pretty little flaxen-haired girl—by-the-bye, what a very pretty picture those two children made riding about the forest together, and taking the jumps that came in their way when we got into the open country; the one, Miss Marjorie Sewell, with her raven black tresses falling in heavy masses down her shoulders; the other, the little princess, Miss Bennett, with her luxuriant flaxen locks—as free as the wind, as happy as birds, these innocent babes in the wood—Mr. and Mrs. Cummins, Miss Savill, Mr. W. S. Horner—who, unluckily, before the day was out had his face badly cut through his horse

bolting through the forest trees—Mr. H. J. Miller and his son, Mr. Rickett, Mr. Cockett, Mr. Doxat, Mr. Howard, of Ivylands, Mr. F. Ball, Mrs. F. Ball on wheels enamelled the colour of forget-me-nots to match her costume; Mrs. C. R. Parkes on foot, also Mrs. W. Sewell on wheels, Mr. Gould, Mr. F. McKenzie, Mr. L. Buxton, Mr. Seal and his nephew, and a good many more who were strangers to me, though they seemed perfectly at home in the forest.

Mr. Quare is never very hard upon late comers; so by 11.30 you had only yourself to blame if you had not partaken, and partaken freely, of all the good things that the proverbial hospitality of Birch Hall provided.

Shortly afterwards, after a hack of some fifteen minutes, we arrived on the scene, where the busy terriers were at work in the earths, and heard the piercing scream that proclaimed Reynard's flight, and set all the field agog, as the hounds streamed over the ride and disappeared in the depths of the vast forest. Like a rocket on his big bay came Mr. Gerald Buxton, carving his way through the crowd, who, in desperate haste, were striking out for the shores of the Forest, the open country for which hounds appeared to be pointing. Was not the remembrance of the great run some fortnight previous fresh upon their followers? If Mr. G. Buxton rode hard (we did not know at the time that he could not hold his horse), Major Ricardo, on his grand grey, that won the Essex Welter Point-to-Point, rode equally fiercely in his determination not to lose sight of such a pilot; and to keep two such luminaries in view I did my best, but doing it found the youths on the handy ponies constantly cutting in as, like eels, they slipped in and out or ducked under the low forest trees.

In breathless haste we reached the open, with straining eyes we sought the vanished pack, and in the same plight came Maiden, the huntsman, from another direction. He, too, had lost his hounds. Not for him to wait and hesitate—a turn of his bridle hand, and he was gone, to plunge once more into the trackless forest, with a strong following, and so men and women rode in blind haste for another fifteen minutes. Anon you came upon one whose judgment you would always sooner rely upon than your own in matters venatic—first Mr. Harry Sworder, then Mr. H. J. Miller, then the Major—all hound-lost; but the Master, with unerring instinct, had got to his hounds, his horn was the signal that rang out sharp and clear as near Copped Hall gates we once more hit off the hounds, and again made for the open country, to enter it beyond Birch

Hall. Oh, Mr. William Pearson, what were you doing there? Why, oh why, were you not attending to matters horticultural,* instead of affairs venatic, for they say that you headed the fox, and back from the open fields he sought safety in the forest's pathless wilds? And so the day wore on. Occasionally a babbling note, as hounds feathered the line of one of the four foxes that had in vain sought refuge in the forest earths, when its sylvan glades were echoing again and again to the melody

Epping in summer dress and yet not a bicycle to be seen

of hounds' full cry, but nothing but a red-hot scent would have served on such a day over the brown carpet of leaves that thickly covered the ground, filling up every hole to a common level, just as drifting snow smooths out the hollows on the bleak moorland—making it dangerous to ride straight ahead without due caution, for any moment you might have found yourself girth deep in the withered leaves.

Once more near the earth a stentorian holloa rang out, was repeated, and rang out again. The first put Master, hounds, and fields on the *qui vive*, the second on the move, the third on

* Mr. Pearson, of Redgrove, Epping, held the post of Hon. Secretary of the Horticultural Show at the Essex Agricultural Society's meeting at Epping in the summer of 1899.—Ed.

the gallop, to find, if nothing else, *the latest way of recovering hounds when lost*, for the enthusiastic pedestrian whose lively holloa in the distance had roused our hopes and stirred our imaginations, confessed upon near approach that he had not seen a hare, but had lost the hounds, and wanted to locate them. As Henry John observed, what could you say to a man like that? Mr. Quare could only smile under his moustache, like Lord Willoughby de Broke, when on the day succeeding the Lincolnshire Handicap (at which meeting he had unsuccessfully backed Mr. Tritton's horse, "Warpaint"), he remonstrated with Mr. James Rose, of Leamington, for getting too near hounds. "'Ware hounds, Mr. Rose! 'Ware hounds." "'Ware paint! my lord," was the ready answer. His lordship smiled grimly under his moustache, and rode on.†

After this, the hour near 1.30, Mr. Quare thought it advisable to give up the Forest and try fresh fields and pastures new. Mr. Buxton, however, would allow none of us to pass his doors without once more partaking of his hospitality, and nothing loth to avail themselves of it did anyone seem on this cold, bracing day. Cakes, sherry, and some grand old ale were done full justice to, as was early demonstrated by the flippant way certain hard-riding members of the field went hopping over the fences, taking in cold blood, Mr. Miller, what we should have looked twice at when hounds were running hard; but, after all, gaps are more dangerous than the hairiest fence.

Arriving at Mr. Avila's farm, a hare was very soon put up. In their eagerness, no doubt, to give the hounds a good start, to get them well laid on, several very keen thrusters rode forward on the line of the hare, which aroused the wrath of one member of the field to such an extent that he said, "I would take the hounds home if they were mine." Perhaps he was right; perhaps Mr. Quare might have been justified, too, in adopting such extreme measures, but would he be the popular man he is to-day if he spoilt the pleasure of the many to punish the unintentional shortcomings of the few? Neither saying he wouldn't take his hounds home nor saying he would—very much reminding me of a very popular clergyman I know, who always says, "Yes, yes," when approached by would-be innovators, but never departs one jot or tittle from the course he has marked out as right—he quietly laid his hounds on, and gave us two or three hours' of excellent hunting and undeniable sport; and this episode gives me the opportunity of asking,

† See "History of the Warwickshire Hunt."

would anyone seek further for the third reason of Mr. Quare's popularity? *Suaviter in modo*, rather than *fortiter in re*, is the guiding principle of Mr. Quare's conduct of his harrier field.

'Twas after 5 p.m. before Mr. Quare gave up. The large morning field had gradually dwindled down to five. Mr. Arthur Sewell, who rarely goes home before the hounds, and knows more about hare hunting than the majority; Mr. Gerald Buxton, who is second to none in his keenness and love of the sport; a stranger who delighted in picking out strong places; Mr. Doxat, from Cheshunt; and one other. We had seen some very good fun on this harrier day. Many saddles had

Outside the Cock Hotel, Epping (before the days of motor cars)

been emptied. It must have been nearly five, Mr. Cummins, when you caught the runaway steed of the man in the soft cap. Maiden said it was not hard falling, and he ought to have known, as he took a rare toss at a big fence when hounds were running very fast over the grass for the Shaws. *En passant*, one cannot help admiring the way Maiden rides to his hounds. No hesitation; no matter what the fence is, over he goes if he wants to turn them; and we all know how much more nerve is required riding to harriers than fox or stag hounds, for you have the same big fence backwards and forwards more than once in the ordinary course.

Hare hunting was soon over; but when the end came, Mr. Quare had the satisfaction of looking back upon a record season.

Mr. Quare has been a hunting man all his life, and what is far more uncommon, a hound man. Commencing on foot with the Essex Hounds in the season 1859-60, he has had the opportunity of studying the methods of various Masters of various packs of hounds in his native county of Essex. In 1892-93 Mr. Quare kept Beagles in Essex, and won second prize for the best couple of unentered dogs in July, 1894, and in July, 1895, second prize for the best couple of entered bitches. Mr. Quare had previously kept Beagles in Cheshire in 1867-68.

In April, 1896, he took over Mr. E. Barclay's pack of Harriers, twenty couples, and hunted five days a fortnight in 1896-97. In July, 1896, at Peterborough, Mr. Quare won the second prize for the best couple of entered dog-hounds, nineteen inch class (Mr. Quare's standard), also second prize for entered bitches. Increasing his pack in 1897-98 to thirty couples, he hunted three days a week, and in July, 1897, at Peterborough, won the following prizes:— First, with "Dexter" and "Dancer," best unentered couple dog-hounds, not exceeding 19 inches. Second prize with "Scalper" and "Windsor," best couple of entered dog-hounds; winning the Champion Cup for dog-hounds with "Scalper." Further, the Silver Cup for best three couples of dog-hounds ("Scalper" and "Windsor"), ("Warbler" and "Signet"), ("Dasher" and "Dexter"), making, with the second prize for entered bitches "Refuge" and "Lovely," five prizes carried off in 1897. In 1898, however, he was even more successful, as the following bare statement will show:—

First prize, best couple of entered dog-hounds ("Dexter" and "Warbler").

Second prize, best couple of entered dog-hounds ("Scalper" and "Signet").

Champion Cup, best single dog-hound ("Warbler").

Silver Cup, best three couples of dog-hounds ("Dexter" and "Warbler"), ("Scalper" and "Windsor"), ("Streamer" and "Signet").

First prize, best couple of unentered bitch hounds ("Sylvia" and "Songstress").

First prize, best couple of entered bitch hounds ("Fuchsia" and "Refuge").

Champion Cup, best single bitch hounds ("Sylvia").

In July, 1899, Mr. Quare again swept the board at Peterborough, winning seven out of nine classes :—

First prize, unentered dog-hounds, 19 inches.

First prize, entered dog-hounds.

Champion Cup, "Dog Hounds."

Champion Cup, dog-hounds, 21 inches, won by "Stormer." (There were 20 entries for this cup.)

Second Prize, best stallion hound, 22 inches, won by "Stormer."

First prize, entered bitch hounds, 19 inches.

Silver Cup, best three couples dog hounds from any kennels.

The greatest triumph was winning with "Stormer," who is only 19 or 19¼ inches, against hounds from well-known packs with a standard of 21 inches.

Mr. E. Barclay measured "Stormer," and found that he was 7½ inches round the leg.

The above record of triumphs is one of which Mr. Quare may well be proud. What Essex sportsmen think of the way he hunts his celebrated pack recently found expression in the handsome testimonial and address with which they presented him at the hands of Mr. George Hart on the occasion of the annual puppy judging at Mr. Quare's kennels at Matching Green in May, 1898. On that occasion Major Aikman, in responding for the Judges, remarked that he had been second to Mr. Quare that year at Peterborough, and from what he could see of the entry he was likely to be second to him next; the Major, as the sequel shows, was not far wrong.

The annual meeting was held at the Green Man, Harlow, on March 11, 1899, Mr. Colvin presiding in the absence through illness of Lord Rookwood. To the regret of all present, Mr. Arkwright could not be induced to reconsider his previously-announced decision of resigning the joint-mastership which he had held with such conspicuous success with Mr. E. S. Bowlby. Mr. Bowlby, however, though expressing great regret at losing Mr. Arkwright's valuable help and assistance (mentioning how harmoniously they had always worked together), consented to go on with the Mastership with the assistance in the field of Mr. C. E. Green.

A good many faces of those who were present at this meeting will be recognised in the excellent photograph (taken by the Master's son, Mr. Arthur Bowlby), which is given on the next page.

Of the day's sport there is little that calls for mention beyond the fact that it was not up to the average class of good sport we have generally met with at the annual meeting.

The Mastership of the Essex Stag Hounds also changed hands at the end of the season, 1898-99; Mr. Pemberton-Barnes being elected at the annual meeting in place of Mr. Sheffield-Neave, who had resigned.

The annual Steeplechases were held at High Roding Bury on Thursday,

The Annual Meet at the Green Man, March 1899 *Plate No. 2.*

L. Buxton G. Brown E. S. Bowlby, M.F.H. S. Caldwell Miss Bowlby A. R. Steele Guy Gilbey
Mr. Littler H. J. Miller Capt. Hon. W. D. Cairns D. Crossman J. Pelly E. Ball
C L. Glyn (on foot)

April 6th; the feature of the meeting being the successful way young Maurice White managed to stick to his horse in spite of his saddle working right round under his horse's belly.

The Essex Hunt Club Cup was won by Mrs. D. Crossman's "Ruth," steered by Mr. S. Caldwell; the Farmer's Plate by Mr. T. Christy's "Cheque-Book," owner up; the Fox Hunter's Plate by Mr. A. J. Tweed's "The Doctor," Mr. Tweed riding. The Open Steeplechase Plate was

Theodore Christy on "Schoolmaster"

won by Mr. Audley Blyth's "Whitehaven," ridden by Mr. Guy Marsh. Percy Tippler rode two winners, viz., Mr. H. F. Simonds' "Bairath," in the Essex United Hunt Cup, and Mr. J. Coleman's "Sweet Bird" in the Roothing Steeplechase Plate. This High Roothing Bury course is not half so pretty as the Rundells Course, but being miles away from anywhere saves it from being inconveniently crowded by the London crowd from the East End.

Half-a-crown was charged for paddock tickets—at Rundells they were free. Percy Tippler told me that he liked the course, and he has ridden over a good many in his time, so I gathered it was a good one.

About the second best hunter Mr. Christy ever owned was "Schoolmaster," Irish-bred, chestnut in colour, he was a very good stayer and fine fencer.

'Tis a pity that Mr. Christy had no photo of "Chinaman," the most useful hunter he ever possessed, for the harder he worked him the more "Chinaman" seemed to thrive, and at the end of February or beginning of March he was always at his best. For three seasons he hunted him regularly with Mr. Neave's Staghounds, a very good training for point-to-point races, of which he won no less than three with his owner up, and a race at Harlow, carrying 13st. 7lb. Mr. Christy thought that the alterations made in the Harlow course in 1896 were a great improvement, and he looked upon it as his lucky one, for he won the same race, the Farmer's Plate, three years in succession, fairly doing the hat trick—"Chinaman" 1894, "Rosebery" 1895, "Schoolmaster," 1896.

Mr. Christy is a finished horseman, and can make a young horse into an accomplished hunter quicker than most men. He has won six point-to-points in the last eight years, and the Farmers' race five times in the past seven years. In 1899 on "Brown Tony," he did a record performance, for carrying top weight he beat all the light weights, and so won both stakes.

Season 1899-1900. Some changes to note in the mastership and the staff, Mr. C. E. Green acting as Field-master in place of Mr. Arkwright who had resigned at the end of last season, and Short, from the Bramham Moor, taking the place of Jack Turner as first whip, and Maiden, from Mr. Quare's establishment, succeeding Harry Easterby as second whip. In personal appearance Short and Maiden are so much alike that they are frequently mistaken for one another.

Jack Turner went to Mr. Arkwright as second horseman. At the Puppy Show held in the summer he received a very useful testimonial in the shape of a purse containing about £300, subscribed by the members of the Hunt, a pretty good evidence of his popularity with all the followers of the E.H.

Cub-hunting commenced at 6 a.m. on Saturday, September 16th, at Latton Park. The ground was so dry and hard after the long and almost unprecedented drought and heat of the long summer of 1899, and there appeared to be so little prospect of any better climatic conditions prevailing for some time, that no one seemed in any hurry to get their hunters up.

However, rain set in towards the end of September, but the ground was not soft enough to get any fun out of riding before the great rain on Friday, September 29th. Commencing in the afternoon it kept on without interruption all night, and again came down in torrents on Saturday night and Sunday morning.

On Monday, October 2nd, hounds met at Coopersale at 7 a.m. We

found a nice litter of cubs in Beachetts, the first, Mr. Gerald Buxton (who has the shooting of this covert) assured me, that had ever been bred there. We ran one cub very nicely through Shalesmore and lost it near Suttons, and we finished off the day in a vain endeavour to try and force a fox out of Weald Coppice.

I noticed the following out during the morning's sport: Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright, Miss Bagot, Mr. F. Ball, Miss Peters, Mr. and Mrs. Barron, Mr. G. Buxton, Miss T. and Miss Maud Buxton, the latter just back from Africa where she had accompanied her father, Mr. Edward North Buxton, upon a most successful hunting expedition—not free by any means from dangerous adventure. On one occasion Mr. Buxton was charged by a lion just as he had brought one down; his daughter, seeing his danger, warned him just in time, and he shot the second one at very close quarters. Another time they (father and

Bay's Grove

daughter) were bicycling along a path when they encountered a lion. Fortunately the two bicycles were too much for the animal's nerves and he made off. What has all this to do with fox-hunting? someone remarks. Nothing, my friend, except that Mr. Buxton and his daughter found that the presence of mind and quickness of decision which the hunting field had certainly helped them to acquire stood them in very good stead on these and other occasions. Others out at Coopersale on the 2nd: Miss Chisenhale Marsh, Mr. W. H. Baddeley, Mrs. Clarke, Mr. Walter Cook, Mr. Newman Gilbey, his first appearance, Fred Green, Colvin Farnell-Watson who had lately returned from Ceylon, where he had been hunting jackal; Messrs. Avila, H. Sworder, S. Fitch, R. Tilling, S. Caldwell, John White,

G. H. Lee, E. Lobb, Colonel Lockwood, Dr. Harris-Butler, Major Ricardo. On foot, Mrs. Bennet and Miss Prance.

Saturday, October 7th. Epping old church, 7 a.m. Overnight I had not intended to hunt, but the sound of horses trotting past my house at 6.45 awoke me, and I resolved to go for a ride at all events. Breakfasting at 8, I was on old "Liscarton" before 9, and a lovely morning it was for a ride, a cloudless sky with a puff of wind from the east.

In the first field near the Bury Farm (Mr. Furze's) I met William Foster (son of old Foster, a well-to-do tailor in Epping when I first came to live in Essex), and he told me that hounds had had two good runs, one from Orange Wood and the other from the Warren, and that they had returned towards Copped Hall. Jogging quietly on I fell in with hounds in the Warren and learnt that they had not really done much, as scent was very indifferent. There were a good many people out, including C. E. Green, F. Green, H. Jones, Miss M. Green, R. Y. Bevan, H. J. Price, John and Maurice White, H. J. Miller, G. H. Lee, W. Cook, E. Cockett, Mr. and Mrs. Weston Crocker, Vivian Nickalls, the famous sculler (just the man to pull you out of a ditch); Harry Sworder, W. Sewell, Miss Dorothy Sewell, S. Caldwell, F. Ball, Captain Wood, Mr. and Mrs. Waters, H. W. Lee.

From Obelisk Wood we ran quite a pretty little ring to ground about two fields from Galley Hills. Green had the cub dug out and killed. The grass yielded but little to the impress of a horse's hoof, and rain, more rain was decidedly wanted.

Did not get any more hunting for eight weeks, missing thereby some very good sport in November, the best November the Essex Hounds had had for years. Mr. Frank Ball very kindly, however, supplied me with the following notes, which will be found of considerable interest to those who follow the fortunes of the Essex Hunt.

The second fortnight of "regular hunting" deserves a detailed record. It opened with a brilliant brush on November 20th, from Blake Hall to Hatfield Grange, in which hounds distanced the field. Two days later, a most enjoyable run from Ongar Park to a kill in Poles Wood, Kelvedon, was slightly marred by difficulty in crossing the Roding. This was followed by a busy Saturday from Hatfield Town, foxes being found directly hounds were in covert at Row Wood, Poplars and Canfield Thrift. Moderate scent baulked hounds of their prey, though their last attempt was kept up for an hour in good style. On the following Monday (27th) Mrs. McIntosh's gorse furnished one of the right sort. His first point was for Bishops Hall, which he nearly reached, then swung round and took us to Pyrgo and through Curtis Mill Green. A drain at Suttons gave him refuge for a time; then he made off to an old earth near Tawney Hall, where he was left to run another day. Wednesday (29th) found us at Galley Hills, a covert which has afforded much of our sport during the present season. This time we had a good gallop across the meadows by Holly Tree Farm, then up to Mr. Bury's, where we changed foxes and ran well back through Galley Hills, ending with another wide

circuit on the Monkhams side of the covert. The week ended in the Roothings, where a brilliant day's sport was enjoyed on December 2nd. Hounds met at Mr. R. Y Bevan's farm at Willingale. A fox was quickly found in Spain's Wood, and was brought to hand in Writtle Park after a good run. Lords Wood was then drawn, and away went a real good Roothing fox. A merry dance he led the field across the High Easter Brook and on almost to Pleshey Church; then away through Fitzjohn's and Israel's—next by Mashbury Mill and Chignal Hall, and thence he made his way across to Skreen's Wood and on to Berner's Wood, where hounds ran into him in the dusk.

Fitz Johns

Another red-letter day in November was when hounds ran from Ashdon to Bardfield, some fifteen miles in one hour and forty minutes, and then went home at one o'clock, everybody having had enough. Short, our first whip, always was in the right place at the right time.

Toot Hill, Monday, December 11th, 1899.—My third day's hunting this season. A slight frost in the night and a sprinkling of snow in the morning made hounds late at the meet, at which a good many, including the following, were present, viz., the Field-master, Mr. C. E. Green; Mrs. Bowlby, Miss Eva Bowlby, Mr. A. S. Bowlby, Col. Lockwood, Mr. and Mrs. F. Ball, Mr. E. Ball, Mr. G. Buxton (Miss M. and T. Buxton joined

us later on), Mrs. and Miss Waters, Mrs. Crossman, in tall hat; Mr. D. Crossman, Mr. F. Green, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Price, Mr. and Miss Jones, Major and Mrs. Ricardo, Major R. B. Colvin; a new member, Mr. Playne,* riding a clever thoroughbred horse and having a reputation for being a very good man across country; Mrs. Barron, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Sewell; Col. Fane on Royal Chieftain, Mrs. Fane, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright, Miss Hattie Tait, Captain Wood, Mr C. F. Fitch, Mr. H. Sworder; Mr. Saward, of Patch Park, who during the day had a nasty roll in the middle of a ploughed field; Sir Charles Smith, Mr. D. Cunliffe-Smith, Mr. Capel-Cure, Mr. George Brown, Mr. H. W. Lee, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. F. Avila, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Miss E. Pelly, Mr. L. Pelly, Mr. E. Lobb, Mr. John White, Mr. Daniel Gingell.

We drew through Ongar Park Woods and some of the Gaynes Park coverts without finding, and then hounds were run through the upper part of Ongar Park again, with like result, and Bailey was making his way through the woods to Rough Talleys when a single hound gave tongue, and the rest of the pack flew to the cry.

Turning sharp back I had the satisfaction of seeing hounds sweep right past me and over three of the rides as they made a big sweep through the woods, and with Colonel Fane, R. C. Lyall, J. Swire, Jack Miller (who was riding Mr. C. E. Green's second horse), Bailey and Maiden (was it Short?), the still greater pleasure of seeing hounds hit off the line in the open in the direction of Blake Hall.

To the back of the station hounds ran like smoke. Leaving Greensted House on the right, they kept on parallel with the line towards Ongar; Miss Jones joined us here, and soon afterwards her father came galloping up. Crossing the road by Water End Farm, our fox got to ground, and the Field, who had had a stern chase, came up—"a very sparkling fifteen minutes."

The fox was duly bolted but slipped hounds.

At Curtis Mill Green they found again, and running close up to Patch Park came away over the river crossing the road (into which Mr. Drummy Smith scrambled as soon as anyone) by Skinner's Farm. Taking the line very nicely through Bush Wood and over Hill Hall Park, we soon reached Beachetts, hounds waking its deepest recesses with their musical cry; and driving their fox out over Hill Hall Park they ran to Barbers at hot pace; and kept it up beyond the covert, over the good-scenting grass fields alongside the brook, crossing it, and causing something more than delay to some of those who tried to follow. I quite expected that "Jenkins" would land me in the middle, but luckily, after a refusal, he saw how easily Col. Fane's horse, "Royal Chieftain," hopped over, and followed him. Hitting the road off, near Mr. Pegrum's farm, not a horse would leave it, Mr. H. J. Price's, Mrs. Bennett's, they all declined the small bank out (but here let me note that, ere the run was over, I saw Mrs. Bennett pop the horse she was riding, a recent purchase of Mr. Harry Sworder's, over a stiff five-barred gate). A gate lower down let the refusers through, and they galloped after hounds towards Stew Green and up to Stonard's Farm, where Mr. Samuel Fitch, on foot, was ready for them. Our fox ran right through the grounds of Theydon Grove from end to end, going out towards Epping Station, to circle back and cross the road into Mr. Ginger's wood. Mr. H. W. Lee giving Mr. E. Ball a lead out of the road in the wake of hounds, while the majority of the field crossed the line by the bridge, and helped to make a line of gaps in the Rev. E. H. Grain's fences before they got on terms again with the pack, near Coopersale Church. Running

* He very soon afterwards rejoined his Yeomanry and went out to the Cape with them.

on through the Forest and Gaynes Park woods, we lost our fox near Jordan's Farm, by which time it was freezing hard with every appearance of a frost setting in—which it did so severely that by Sunday, December 17th, skating was going on in various parts of the country, the Lake on Epping Plain bearing well.

Monday a cold thaw set in, enabling us to hunt on Wednesday, December 20th, when we met at Great Parndon.

One of the first men I encountered at the meet was Major Beale Colvin, who informed me that he, with several of the troopers belonging to the Duke of York's own Loyal Suffolk Hussars, were going out with the body of 3,000 Imperial Yeomanry which Lord Chesham was to command. Of course little else but the war was talked about in the hunting field, for directly or indirectly it affected everyone. Mr. Peel told me that his son, who was with General French's force, had been placed *hors de combat*. H. E. Jones said his son was going out. Col. Lockwood said he quite expected that the reserve of officers to which he belonged would be called out and have to go. Ford Barclay said he was going out with one of the irregular troops being raised, and that he quite expected the following Christmas to be camping out on the veldt with the force besieging Pretoria. F. Green, in answer to a question of mine, if there had not been a great run on his ships (the Orient Line), replied that the Government wanted all they could possibly spare.

The sport was of indifferent character and does not call for any lengthy notice. A fox was chopped in Latton, and another with an injured foot only stood up for an in-and-out ten minutes at piping pace from the small springs outside Latton Park, being killed near Epping Long Green.

Saturday, December 23rd, 1899. Waples Mill. A very foggy morning at starting for the meet, but the sun broke through and it turned out a lovely day.

This was my first day in the Roothings this season, and my first day upon old "Berserker." I was doubtful whether I should be able to hold him on account of my shoulder,* but found the strap round my arm a great help.

There was a good muster, including Frank Jones, H. E. Jones's son, who had volunteered and expected to go out with the Imperial Yeomanry to South Africa. F. Green's son, Sydney, was also going, and young John White told me that he had volunteered.

There was a very keen, hard-riding lot out, including: Mr. E. S. Bowlby and his son; Miss E. Bowlby, Mr. and Mrs. L. Arkwright, Mr. Fred Green and his son, Charlie Green (just back from Harrow), Miss M. Green, Mr. and Mrs. Waters, Miss Morgan, Mr. Hilliard, Mr. H. E. Jones, Miss Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Mr. and Mrs. Woodhouse, Mr. T. Usborne, M.P., Miss Usborne, Mr. A. R. Steele and Miss Steele, Col. Lockwood, M.P., Messrs. A. J. Tweed, J. Swire, H. Blyth, P. Gold, F. Basham, Ford Barclay, W. and C. E. Ridley, F. Ball, T. Christy on "Brown Tony," N. Gilbey, S. Caldwell, Weston Crocker, George Brown.

It was quite evident before the day was over that the unenviable notoriety which the Roothing country had acquired for its paucity of foxes was fully justified. Not a fox was found in any of the following coverts: Spains Wood, Willingale (from which such a good run had taken place earlier in the season across to Blackmore High Woods) proved blank. When Spains Wood was being drawn there was great competition to be first down the lane leading to the covert, the exit of one at a time out of the lane on the previous occasion, already alluded to, having brought

* I had dislocated it a month previously.

disaster to a good many, in fact to nearly all who failed to get through in the first dozen, for hounds ran at a great pace. F. Green was one of the lucky ones to see the run, and to see it well. After Spains came Screens and its surrounding coverts, then Berners Wood, then Lords and Leaden; nor did we find until we reached Man Wood, only to be rewarded with a spin to Brick-kilns and back.

Wednesday, December 27th, 1899. Tyler's Cross. It froze so hard in the early hours of the morning that hounds did not put in an appearance before 12. Bailey was not at all keen about hunting, as he said that the ploughs would cut the hounds' feet to pieces, so Gerald Buxton suggested that they should go on to Nasing Coppice, where it was all grass. As luck would have it, just as hounds were going steadily on over Nasing Common, a fox jumped up in view, Mr. Seymour Caldwell being the first to spot him; hounds fairly flew across the common and lost their fox beyond the coppice near Deer Park; what with the cold and "Berseker's" pulling, my hands were quite benumbed by the time we reached Deer Park, so I welcomed a check. W., who was riding "Liscarton," said he could not get over the ant-hilly common fast enough to keep with hounds.

We next put into Galley Hills, and very soon had a fox away to Shatter Bushes, where a very pretty little gallop came to an end.

Our next find was one of young Bury's foxes in the fagot heap, and this one led us a very nice little dance over the grass by Nasing Schools, crossing the road up to Deer Park, going through that covert and on to Galley Hills, and without dwelling reached the place he started from. Bolted from his refuge; at starting he ran much the same line as before, but turned quicker for Galley Hills, from which covert he, or another fox, took us out at the bottom end towards Obelisk Wood, and ran to ground in the Forest, near Honey Green Lane. Altogether it was a very jolly day, in spite of the frost.

Young Bury went very well, taking his own line; he appeared to have a very useful horse that knew its business.

Three strangers out—the Marquis of Headfort, Miss Carr-Ellison and Miss Faudel Phillips. After the Marquis had broken his horse's knees jumping into a road, they all went home.

Monday, January 1, 1900, "Brook House." A sharp frost in the night and a dense fog in the morning, it looked anything but propitious for hunting by the time we arrived at the meet, where there was quite a bumper gathering, including Mr. and Mrs. L. Arkwright, Mr. F. Avila, Messrs. E. A. Ball, F. Barclay, Miss E. Bowlby, Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Barron, Mrs. Bennett, her little girl, Mr. Arthur Bowlby and his young brother, Misses M. and T. Buxton, Mr. Gerald Buxton, Mr. Seymour Caldwell, S. Chisenhale-Marsh (his first appearance for several seasons, I believe; he told me that his children between them had lamed all his horses); Mr. W. Cook, Mr. and Mrs. D. Crossman, Mr. W. Dalton, Guy and Noel Edwards, Col. and Mrs. Fane, Mr. C. F. Fitch. Mr. and Mrs. E. Sheppard, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. F. Green and his son Charlie, and another small boy and girl; Mr. T. R. Hull, Miss Hull, Mr. H. E. Jones, Miss Jones, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. Lobb, Col. Lockwood, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Vivian and Miss Pelly, Mr. H. H. Raphael, Mr. E. Savill, Mr. and Mrs. W. Sewell, Mr. A. Sewell, Sir Charles Smith, Mr. D. Cunliffe-Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Waters, Mr. Tyndale White and his son John, and W. H. B. Yerburgh. No sport owing to fog.

January 10, Thrushes Bush. Some spell it Threshers Bush; I have two large maps, on each it is differently spelt; so I have adopted the first throughout these Leaves.

Barnsleys was the first covert we tried, then Mark Hall, both blank. In Bay's Grove hounds found instanter and ran at a great pace to Latton, checked there, and getting away again pulled their fox down in the open two fields from Latton Priory, when the opportunity was taken of blooding two youthful aspirants to fox-hunting fame; Charley Newman Gilbey was one of them, and I fancy a cousin or brother of his the other.

I was out of this hunt from Latton, as were most of those who were in the middle ride when the fox broke.

Herbert Blyth, however, was one of the fortunate ones who got well away and led the dance—as he remarked to me after the kill, hunting in Leicestershire teaches you to be quick; jump the first fence whatever it is, and you are all right. But there was no fence in that middle ride to jump—only a big crowd to wedge you in. What, then, Mr. B.? "No business to have got there, sir," I fancy he would reply.

Parndon Woods, for a wonder, failed us, but in the small spinney adjoining Mr. Todhunter's house a fox was at home. Here I and W. had a great stroke of luck. Thinking that the holloa was the Pinnacle side, we rode for it to find to our dismay that we were wrong, and what was still worse, that the old gap by the side of the wood was done up with rails, making it quite unjumpable from our side; the fence itself was impracticable, and riding along it no weak spot could be seen. Resigning ourselves to the inevitable, we were retracing our steps without any hopes of seeing hounds again in that run, when we suddenly espied Short, the first whip, gallop up to the corner of the wood, and he asked us if we had seen the fox, which had doubled back into the wood. To make a long story short, I and W. were at the head of affairs when the fox broke, and again made for Parndon Woods; pressing him through these, hounds ran him across Rye Hill Common to Latton Park; coming away from there over the common, they returned to Parndon Woods, where within two fields of it a flight of rails over which Mr. J. Swire had flown brought Mr. Bevan to grief. The Admiral and I jumped off to the rescue, but luckily, beyond having the wind knocked out of him and being somewhat bruised, Bevan was none the worse for being used as a door mat by his quad. Leaving Parndon Woods we ran our fox at slow pace to Marles and lost him near Thornwood Common. Altogether a nice hunting run. They did not find again.

Wednesday, January 17th, Tylers Cross. Hacked on to the meet with W., and we were overtaken by Tilling and Gerald Buxton, the latter of whom said he had just received a letter from his cousin Lawrence Buxton, who was with Sir Redvers Buller's force, and that he had stated that there was no doubt about their having had a tremendous hiding on the Tugela.*

Nothing like such a large muster as the previous Wednesday, the threatening appearance of the weather no doubt deterring a good many, but the following names occur to me: Mrs. Bowlby and Miss E. Bowlby, Mr. Arthur Bowlby, Mr. and Mrs. L. Arkwright, Major and Mrs. Ricardo, Mr. Vivian Nickalls, Mr. J. Pelly, Miss E. Pelly, Vivian Pelly, Mr. R. Bury, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Mr. H. E. Jones, Mrs. and Miss Waters, Mr. H. J. Price, Mr. and Mrs. Weston Crocker, Mr. Balfour, of Moor Hall, Mr. T. J. Howard, Mr. F. Avila, Mr. A. Peel, Miss E. Peel and her sister, Mr. E. W. Young, Mr. J. Green, young Chapman, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. R. S. Tilling, Mr. G. Buxton, Miss T. Buxton, Mr. E. Savill and his

* Another instance (though unofficial) that Englishmen are not given to magnifying every defeat into a glorious victory, like the Boers.—Ed.

sister, Mr. C. E. Green, Miss M. Green, Mr. J. Swire, Mr. Seymour Caldwell, Mr. N. Gilbey and his son, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. John White, Mr. Ford Barclay, Mr. J. Todhunter, Dr. Love, Mr. Christie.

A move was first made to Pinnacles without finding, and then to Roydon Grove and Tattle Bushes. In the latter covert there was a fox that did not wait to be found, and his exit was not discovered until hounds were being blown out of covert. Only those who were lucky enough to be in or very near the covert when hounds found had the chance of a start. Mr. Arkwright, Mr. R. Bury, Mr. Tyndale White, Mrs. Arkwright, young John White, Mr. A. Giles, Mr. T. R. Hull, and Mr. V. Nickalls were among the lucky few. Hounds came away at a great pace and crossed the Low Hill Road, running on towards Mr. Bury's. Immediately after we had crossed the Low Hill Road we were pulled up by a locked gate which everyone crowded round. Mr. Nickalls, however, managed to squeeze through the press, and his good roan horse jumped the gate at a stand, giving him a lead which no one would have wrested from him had hounds run on instead of being pulled up some half-a-dozen fields further on just as they had fairly embarked on a most lovely country. It was bad luck for him, and bad luck also for all those who squeezed through the gate afterwards when John White had fetched it off its hinges—that what promised to be such a good run was so quickly nipped in the bud.

Our next move was to the Policies around Nasing Park. Here we found but could not get the fox away; bad luck also attended our third venture at Nasing Coppice, a fine fox getting to ground within a field of the covert. Going to Galley Hills, after running on the line of a fox nearly up to Shatter Bushes, hounds found at once, the fox most accommodatingly breaking in full view of us all, as we waited at the bottom end near Monkhams Lane. No one could complain about getting a bad start, but how many, ere the run was over, had failed to keep the place they had started with.

Running past Mr. Dewey's Farm we surged down the first grass field. Mr. V. Nickalls did not wait to open the gate out of it, but at once jumped the fence, which Mr. Ford Barclay and a few others flew on his left (the gate, it turns out, was fastened, and this threw a good many behind). Hounds ran fast up to Shatter Bushes, through that covert, and away towards Nasing Coppice, Mr. V. Nickalls again scoring as he jumped a high rail out of the lane near Deer Park (no one caring to follow his chestnut's lead). Riding on with Mr. H. J. Price and others towards the Coppice, over ground cruelly heavy, we had hounds on our right, and very soon they came right across us, as our fox had turned back for Galley Hills; not entering this covert, he went away down the hill, crossing the road near Nasing Schools, Mr. Nickalls once more being the quickest to get to them as they ran on at a great pace towards Mr. Bury's fagot stack.

Just short of St. Leonards the fox swung to the left through Mr. Bury's gorse, and went a rare bat up to Galley Hills, Mr. V. Nickalls being first into the covert with hounds, followed by the huntsman, and first whip, Mr. Arkwright and Miss Peel. Few others were near them when they left this covert (for it was sobbing work for horses up to and through Galley Hill, and many had to ease their horses) and went away for Shatter Bushes, hanging a bit after the first two or three fields; one or two more, including Mr. D. Crossman and young John White, joined the ranks. After leaving Claveringbury Farm behind we had a couple of fields up hill, and Mr. Nickalls' chestnut could no longer go as before, though he still kept plugging on. Arkwright, who, fortunately for him, had just secured his second

Running for Ongar Park

horse before the run commenced, was going very strong. Curiously enough, one of the first into Shatter Bushes was the little, fair-haired Miss Bowlby. How she got there I do not know. Hounds checked for some time at Shatter Bushes, which allowed the field to get up before they got on the line again. Crossing the Cobbin End lane, hounds flew along over the grass for Orange Wood, Mr. Arkwright, Bailey, Short, and Miss Morgan being among the first few over the brook below Gill's Farm. As hounds bore down the hill for Orange Wood, Bailey for some reason or other turned to the left through the farm-yard, and nearly everyone followed him, with the exception of Mr. Seymour Caldwell and Mr. Swire; Mr. Caldwell getting down at a very trappy fence into the field running up to the wood (he was riding a well-bred little horse belonging to Reggie Hill). Leaving Orange Wood behind, Mr. Jones riding his favourite horse, the Colonel soon joined Messrs. Swire and Caldwell; but the run was nearly over, for two or three fields further on, at the bottom of the hill leading up to Waltons, General Marter's house, our good fox got to ground in a drain, and although he was bolted out he was never recovered, but I am afraid was drowned in the Cobbin brook, which was running in flood at the time. We wound up the day with a very fast gallop from Parndon Woods to Galley Hills; Mr. A. Giles, Miss T. Buxton, and the boy on the bang-tailed bay, being among the few who stayed to the end.

Bobbingworth Windmill, January 22nd. Started out with R. on "Liscarton" after luncheon, and fell in with hounds running full cry near Knightsland Wood to Ongar Park. Scent had been at a discount all day and did not improve in the afternoon, when we found ourselves in the Gaynes Park preserves, only a small field out, including C. E. Green, Tyndale White, John White, G. H. Lee, Frank Ball, Colonel Fane, Major Ricardo, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Waters, J. Swire, Mrs. Bennett, R. C. Lyall, A. Bowlby, S. Chisenhale Marsh and his son, Hugh Hart, Mrs. Crossman, J. G. Pelly, V. Pelly, C. K. Carr.

Wake Arms, January 24th. Rode with R. to the meet. A big muster, including Mr. R. Lockwood, in the blue coat of the Beaufort Hunt; Mr. R. Tilling, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mrs. L. Arkwright, Mr. F. Ball, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. F. Avila, Mr. S. Fitch, Mr. G. Buxton, Miss T. Buxton, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Mr. Victor Buxton and two of his children on ponies and out for the first time with foxhounds; Mr. E. Cockett, Mr. W. Cook, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman, Guy and Noel Edwards, Mr. W. Sewell, Miss Dorothy Sewell, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. D. Gregory, Mr. W. S. Horner, Mr. F. E. Loyd, Miss M. Morgan, Mr. J. Pelly, Vivian Pelly, Major and Mrs. Ricardo, Mr. A. T. Sewell, Mrs. Waters, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. R. Bury, Rev. A. F. Russell, Mr. C. H. Pyne, Mr. W. Gingell, Captain Wood. Driving, Mr. and Mrs. F. McKenzie.

Beech Hill Park was swarming with foxes, and hounds snapped up three directly, much to the satisfaction of Mr. A. J. Edwards, who, although unable to hunt, had been looking well after the interests of his hunting friends by keeping these foxes for them. It was a great pity that they had not been routed out in the cub-hunting season.

Going away with a fourth fox, hounds worked out quite a nice hunting run on the outskirts of the Forest, after first running up to the King's Oak and coming back by Dick Turpin's Cave. Only one drawback to this country, which has been alluded to previously in these Leaves, there is too much wire about.

We drew several of the Copped Hall coverts blank, Spratts Hedgerow, Orange Wood, &c., and finished off the day with a Nasing Coppice fox, which was lost near Nasing Park after crossing the Common.

Pleshey Mount

Bushetts

On Saturday, January 27th, after a prolonged and ineffectual attempt to get a fox away from C. E. Ridley's new gorse, and after drawing the whole Pleshey country blank, at 3.20 p.m. they found themselves at Screens, and had a rare good run from that covert of an hour and thirty minutes, running through Roxwell, where those who plunged in and out of the brook, led by Hilliard, had a great advantage, and on through Lady Grove, with very pretty hunting up to Lea Wood and Writtle Park, thence through King Wood to Hylands Park, where the fox went close to the lake near the house, and perhaps because he was frightened by a shooting party, who were probably having their last treat for the season, went on and across the river and close up to the Dye Works at Chelmsford, where information was received that the fox had gone on to the railway, but being dusk the chase was abandoned. The day finished with a participation in the generous hospitality of Mr. T. Usborne, M.P., followed by a ride home through a night of Stygian darkness, hounds not reaching the kennels till nearly 9 o'clock.

Monday, January 29th. We met at Dudbrook, where Mr. and Mrs. Crossman very hospitably entertained us all before hounds moved off.

For many years the Dudbrook coverts have been noted for their dearth of foxes, the late tenant, Mr. David P. Sellar, never having taken any interest in their preservation. Now, however, with the advent of two such keen fox-hunters as Mr. and Mrs. Crossman we may hope for better things in the future. That we did not find upon this occasion was a great disappointment to them both, as it was well known that there were foxes at Dudbrook, and before the day was over we brought one of them back from Curtis Mill Green and then put up another.

It was a bitterly cold morning. All those who had driven to the meet looked perished, and required very little persuasion to try the hot coffee, or orange or cherry brandy. Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright and J. Pelly were staying in the house, while among those present at the first meet that had been held at Dudbrook for probably nigh half a century were Mrs. and Miss Bowlby, Mr. C. E. Green, Major and Mrs. Ricardo, Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Ball, Mr. E. A. Ball (about his third appearance at the covert side this season), Colonel Lockwood, Miss M. Morgan, Mr. Tyndale White and his son, Mr. R. Waltham, Mr. F. Avila, Miss T. Buxton, Mr. A. W. Craig, Captain Wood, Messrs. Ford Barclay, Jones, Brown, Bevan, Lee, Cockett, Fitch, E. Savill, E. Lobb, L. Marriage, Miss Jones, Mrs. Barron, Mrs. Bennett, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Waters, Sir Charles Smith and his two sons, Colonel and Mrs. Fane, Mrs. W. R. Clarke, Mr. F. Green, Miss M. Green, Miss E. Pelly, Miss C. Pelly, Mr. L. Pelly, Miss Savill.

A brief scurry from Curtis Mill Green to Dudbrook warmed us up at mid-day. This is always a sporting line of

Guy Gold Philip Gold
D.C.O. Imperial Yeomanry

country to ride over, offering, as it does, such variety in the obstacles that have to be negotiated, and by many, including Mr. Crossman, is much preferred to the Roothings.

Late in the afternoon we found a brace of foxes at Colonel Lockwood's, but had not scent enough to push them, and we finished up a very indifferent day's sport by drawing Loughton Shaws and a wood behind Birch Hall blank.

Corporal Audley Blyth, D.C.O. Imperial Yeomanry

Everyone was very depressed at the news from the front, the retreat from Spion Kop, where so many of our gallant soldiers had lost their lives.

Fred Green told me that his son Sydney, who was going out as a yeomanry trooper, found that he had plenty of real hard work to do, getting up at 5.30 every morning, grooming his own horse, &c. (see p. 221).

Miss M. Morgan said her brother was delighted to be going, and Eric Lobb complained that he had to stop at home and look after the house, as three of his brothers had gone, or were going immediately; his mother, who lives at Woolston Hall, Chigwell, has indeed something to be proud of that three of her sons should volunteer to fight for their Queen and

Trooper Rupert Blyth, D.C.O. Imperial Yeomanry

country. Godwin, of the Hon. Artillery Company, went out with the Mounted Infantry Detachment of the C. I. V.; his brothers, Guy and Gordon, joined the Montgomeryshire Yeomanry, and went out very soon afterwards.

It is very satisfactory to note how all the hunting men of Essex responded to Sir Redvers Buller's call for more mounted troops in the hour of their country's need—yes, and that too!

long before Mr. Winston Churchill's well-known message was flashed across the sea, "*Are all the Gentlemen of England Fox-hunting?*" they were ready and willing to go. Mr. Lancelot Rolleston, whose portrait appears in these pages (see vol. i., page 5), was by no means the only Master of Hounds who went out with his yeomanry troop at this great crisis in England's history. Lieut.-Colonel Colvin, late Master

Lance Corporal Guy Errington Lobb (No. 49 Company, Imperial Yeomanry).

of the Essex and Suffolk Hounds, whose name appears so often in these pages, and whose portrait will be found on page 18, vol. i., was one of the first to volunteer to go out, but his services were requisitioned to serve his country at home as Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General to the Imperial Yeomanry (for corps raised outside the head-quarters of the existing

yeomanry regiment). Mr. Percy Whitaker, Master of the Oakley, and a former Master of Hounds in Essex, whose name also has been mentioned in this journal, immediately volunteered for active service and went out with his troop. While of the humbler votaries of fox-hunting in Essex, to names I have already mentioned in foot-notes or elsewhere in

Lance-Corporal Gordon Horak Lobb (No. 49 Company, Imperial Yeomanry).

these pages, I would add, Mr. Audley Blyth and Mr. Rupert Blyth, sons of Sir James Blyth; Mr. Philip and Mr. Guy Gold, sons of Mr. Charles Gold, M.P., who joined the "Duke of Cambridge's Own." While hunting occasionally with us, but known perhaps better over the border with the Puckeridge, let me add Mr. Alfred Gosling's name, making with Mr. Seymour Gosling and Mr. George St. Clowes no less than seven members

of the Stansted Polo Club who had gone, or were going, to the front; Mr. Johnson, son of Mr. Henry Fielder Johnson, of Piper's Harlow; young Willis, son of the late George Willis, of the Saracen's Head, Dunmow; Mr Ford Barclay, who went out to join one of the Colonial contingents; Mr. F. Avila's nephew, James Christy, junr.; young Blyth, son of Mr. W. Blyth, of Sturgeons; and three of Mr. Hollebone's sons, names all well known in the hunting fields of Essex.

Lance-Corporal Godwin St. John Lobb, C.I.V.

"Ripley"—(1878).

CHAPTER X.

Hunting from Town—One of the Penalties of it—The Brick Kiln Fox—Sir Charles Smith and Mr. Thomas Cowee to the front again—Matching Park—A Memorable Run—Dewley Wood—Greensted Wood—The Select Few—Dexter has it—The Annual Meeting, 1900—Lord Rookwood Presides—Mr. Bowlby Resigns the Mastership—Saving the Blank—See it out Mr. Tilling—Another late Find—A Kill in Epping Forest—Little Laver Mill to Galley Hills—How we did it—Mr. C. Pitch breaks his collar bone—Where are the Light Weights?—George Brown shows the way—F. Green to the rescue—The Ambulance—Refusers—Short's Method—Through Epping Town—The last day of the Season, 1899-1900.

HUNTING FROM TOWN.

IN Essex the frost broke up sufficiently for hounds to take the field at High Roothing Street on Saturday, February 17th. But the going was bad and the sport indifferent.

'Tis with Wednesday, February 21st, the meet Great Parndon, that I take up the thread of my hunting narrative. If you are living in town you must breafast betimes if you would catch a hunting train for a day in Essex. This, however, is no hardship to the fox-hunting enthusiast, who rather enjoys an early start, the early anticipation of sport to come. Therefore it was not a matter of surprise, before the train steamed out of the station, to see those keen votaries of the sport of kings, Mr. R. S. Tilling and Mr. P. J. Pelly, booted and spurred, on the platform. Hacking on to the meet I overtook Frank Ball and his wife, and heard that hounds had had a very fair run on Monday from Mrs. McIntosh's gorse.

There was plenty of time to note the names of those who were present at Wednesday's meet during the twenty minutes hounds were kept waiting for the Countess of Warwick's arrival. No one demurred at this delay. All were delighted to see Lady Warwick hunting again with the Essex, and she seemed equally pleased to be back with her old pack.

We were all glad, too, that our Master, Mr. E. S. Bowlby, was able to ride again, and hoped that the rumour of his resigning the Mastership at the end of the season was a rumour and a rumour only. Mrs. Bowlby was out also, Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. Arthur Bowlby and the three Miss Bowlby's, Mr. F. Avila, Mr. E. A. Ball, Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Ball, Mr. F. T. Basham, Mr. W. H. Baddeley, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. H. Blyth, M. G. Buxton, Miss T. Buxton, Mr. S. Caldwell, Mrs. W. R. Clarke, Mr. E. E. Cockett, Mr. Walter Cook, Mr. and Mrs. Weston Crocker, Mr. C. F. Fitch, Mr. H. P. Gee, Mr. N. Gilbey, Mr. Tresham Gilbey, Miss A. Gold, Mr. Gerald Gold, Mr. F. Green, Miss M. Green, Mr. T. J. Howard, Mr. W. S. Horner, Mr. Eric Lobb, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Mr. A. Peel, Miss E. Peel, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Major and Mrs. Ricardo, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Messrs. L. and E. Savill and Miss Savill, Rev. R. L. Scott, Mr. A. T. Sewell, Mr. and Mrs. W. Sewell and Miss Dorothy Sewell, Mr. S. Single, Mr. A. R. Steele, Miss C. Steele and Miss M. Steele, Mr. R. S. Tilling, Mr. J. Todhunter, Mr. B. E. Todhunter, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Waters, Mr. Tyndale White and Mr. John White, Mr. E. W. Young, Mr. E. S. Kennedy, Mr. Balfour, Mr. James Green and son, Mrs. Hine.

What sort of scent do you think there will be? elicited from that veteran Mr. W. Sims Horner, the reply, "Ah! that's impossible to say." Both Mr. Lyall and another man rashly hazarded that, with the frost in the ground and the strong cold wind blowing, scent would be at a discount. They were deceived; though, with the first fox discovered, just outside Parndon Woods, scent was not good enough for hounds to press him, until after crossing Rye Hill Common he turned up wind; a turn that did Mr. G. Buxton out of his usual place in a good run; for, stopping to help Short, who had come to grief, to remount, he took a wrong turn, thinking hounds were pointing forestwards; and, taking one wrong turn, he kept taking others, which in the deep state of the ground it was impossible to make good at the pace hounds ran. Short, however, was more fortunate, and got to hounds by Marles just as they fairly settled down to run with a will, and was very soon demonstrating that he was on a good timber jumper, no one caring for the rails he selected.

Leaving Marles Wood on our left, we crossed the farm road, Mr. Arkwright leading, followed by Mr. T. J. Howard on his grey, and Mr. F. Green on his chestnut, and the Admiral on his 'bus-horse. No one headed them over this delightful grass country, although there were plenty close on their heels, until hounds checked for a few seconds just on the edge of Epping Green, Mr. Gerald Gold breaking the rails that barred our access to it.

Hounds entered Parndon Woods at the Nasing corner, and our ranks closed up, about twenty being ready for the gap by the time Short's holloa away, half-way down the covert-side, was heard—Mrs. Bowlby, Mr. Arkwright, Mr. G. Gold, Mr. Tresham Gilbey, about the first through; Mr. E. Lobb, on his black thoroughbred mare, going for a stiff stile* on the right of the gap with the same pluck and determination that his twin brother, Godwin St. John Lobb, led his company of the C.I.V. when Lord Roberts seized Jacobsdal on February 15th. The mare hit it hard, and, nearly pitching a somersault, sent her rider flying well clear of her, and, galloping off, was not recovered for three fields.

* About the first time I have seen this stile attempted, the well-known and well-worn poached-up gap, with its deep drop and greasy landing (the only other feasible place in the fence) having far too great an attraction for the majority of us.—Ed.

A Kill near Albyns

Beyond Mr. Todhunter's spinney we had a five minutes' check. Recovering the line beyond the Tyler's Cross to Parndon, Lane hounds crossed the brook and ran very hard for Pinnacles. "Is there a way over?" said Mr. C. E. Green to Mr. Arkwright. "Only the bridge a field to the left," came the reply, and for the bridge on the left they went. Bailey, however, had spied a way in and out, a fairly easy walk down, but a steep sideways' scramble out, and no horse out of the half dozen that followed him did it better than Mrs. Bowlby's. After the brook a choking plough up-hill took the pull out of most horses, the Admiral still fanning in front, as we ran up to Pinnacles, and with our forces rather augmented left the wood behind and made for Roydon—Messrs. E. and F. Ball both well to the fore. Just short of Roydon our fox turned, Mr. Arthur Waters finding the quickest way in and out of a lane for the left-hand contingent as hounds ran on for Parndon.

Swinging once more to the right they ran like smoke for Todds brook, crossing the road below Northbrooks and running past Passmores. They crossed some heavy fields with plenty of fencing, Mr. Balfour's good chestnut whipping round at one blind place. In and out of a lane sharp with Mr. C. E. Ridley and Mr. Charles Green, and as hounds turned once more to the left and ran on fast for Parndon Woods, you could note that Mr. Peel, Mr. Avila, Mr. H. Blyth, Mr. Waters, Mr. Tyndale White and his son (on Miss Morgan's young chestnut) were in the first dozen that were going in front, and reached the woods with hounds.

Inside or outside the covert, which was it to be? The first cannot be wrong, thought Mr. Sam Fitch, as he plunged up the boggy ride. Coming away with, some affirm, a fresh fox by Mr. Burchell's Farm, hounds went at a great pace over Mr. Ralph Palmer's barbed-wire begirt land, and, turning to the right, got away from the huntsman and all who attempted to ride the line—a further delay occurring after crossing the Tyler's Cross road at a fence which even Mr. Peel declared was too brambly for him. The staff, with Mr. Arkwright, galloped away to the left to turn it, while Mr. Gerald Gold, rather more fortunate, found a place on the right, and Mr. Avila, who followed him, hung up his hat in the fence to mark the place for Mrs. Bowlby, who was waiting her turn to go at it. No one, however, caught the hounds before we reached Pinnacles, except some half dozen who had made good use of the road when we left Parndon Woods. At Pinnacles this good hunting run of one hour and forty minutes was virtually over, and the lucky mortals who possessed second horses were glad to get hold of them.

Just as hounds were thrown into Latton Park it was reported that Ladysmith* had been relieved. This put everyone in good heart, and Mr. Arkwright looked more pleased than usual when hounds found at once in his covert, and pushing their fox round came away at the Parndon end, running the green lane for a short distance towards the Priory Farm before turning off for Rye Hill.

At a splitting pace hounds ran across the common for Parndon Woods, and without checking went straight through and out at the bottom end of the further wood, and over the grass down to Broomfields. One at a time we clattered in hot haste through Mr. Hodgkins' grounds and immediately jumped the blind ditch out of the road; three or four more fences and we were on the common, with hounds simply flying along in front of us tailed out by the pace, and nearest to them, the huntsman, E. Short,

* A rumour, alas, untrue, but a week later it was accomplished, one of our hunting men, L. Buxton, being wounded in the final attack on the Boers.—Ed.

Mr. Arkwright, Mr. H. Blyth on his grey, Mr. Tresham Gilbey on his bay, Mr. Tyndale White on his grey, the Admiral on his good black, voting him before we were half-way across the common no better than his 'bus-horse, Mr. Peel on his bay.

With hounds or without, what a difference it makes to a horse over Nasing Common. Up hill, down dale, over the ant hills, those near the hounds galloped as if on the smoothest turf ("Jenkins" with his blood well up fairly pulling), and so reached the bottom end of Nasing Coppice with hounds, and coming away with them as they fanned away for Deer Park (Mr. P. J. Pelly voting it good enough to that point). A slight check, the first from Latton, and we were away for Galley Hills again at a slower rate; Mr. B. E. Todhunter boring a way through a thick fence for Mrs. Bowlby and some more of us on the left who were hung up.

Ongar

Running straight through Galley Hills the fox broke the Monkham's end, and I viewed them going away over a beautiful country in the direction of Hollyfield Hall. Saw Bailey jump out of the lane to join them. Caught sight of Lady Warwick in close pursuit of hounds, and putting some right who wanted to know where hounds were, I set off to catch my train. To leave hounds in the middle of a good run with one's second horse quite fit (the frost had not told upon "Jenkins") is one of the penalties you very often incur *when hunting from town*.

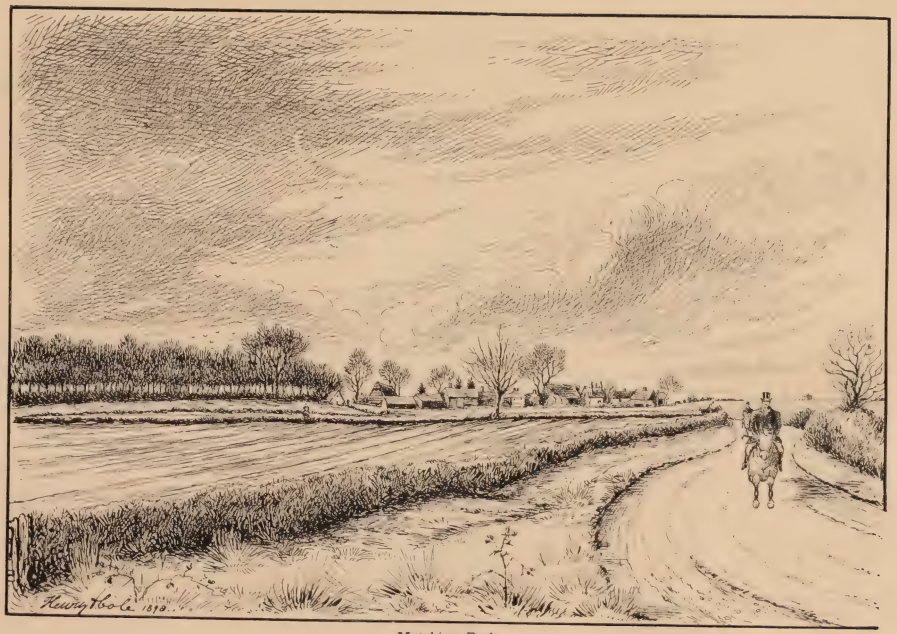
Wednesday, March 7th, Moreton. And as luck would have it, to find the fox which just four days previously had afforded such a good run in the afternoon from Brick Kilns. The hour 12 when we found him, and he was away at once from the Matching Green side of Brick Kilns, and a Wednesday field minus most of our friends from the Stansted side of the country sat down to ride and see the fun, Miss E. Pelly losing her hat

very early in the run. The pace was fast enough to test the condition of a horse, and I soon found out that a fortnight's rest had not done "Peter" any good, as hounds fanned along across some heavy ploughed fields in the direction of Little Laver before taking a swing towards Moreton. Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright, riding wide on the right, were only two out of the fifty or sixty who were really well placed with hounds in the thirty-five minutes up to the first check beyond Norwood near Lampett's Farm.

In this gallop, occupying as I did a middle position between the first rank, whose horses had got it in them, and the third rank, whose horses could not quite go the pace, an old reflection came back very forcibly to my mind, namely, that an Essex field never rides harder than it does at the end of the season. Not a man nor woman appeared to be shirking a fence. All seemed determined to see all that there was to be seen and fairly revelled in the Roothing ditches. Mr. Tyndale White on his grey was very much to the fore. John White was jumping places others would not look at. Just before we touched Norwood Mr. Swire was carrying barbed wire away from gateways. The Admiral was shoving his black along; Ned Ball on his fine chestnut had a line of his own, he always did shine in a quick thing across the Roothings. His brother Frank was always near the hounds. Messrs. David Christy—father and son—were both there, the latter on a very good horse. Mr. B. E. Todhunter, on his bold, big, jumping bay, was not a man to lose sight of, as he was one of the lucky individuals who had seen the good run already alluded to. Mr. George Brown was riding, as he always does, with an eye to the leading hound. Mr. Howard, on his grey, held as good a place as anyone. Miss Ethel Jones was in her element (a run across the Roothings). Mr. Balfour, of Moor Hall, was going strong. Mr. Barron, on his grey; Mr. F. Green on his chestnut; Miss M. Green, Mr. Seymour Caldwell, Mr. Carr; Mr. Thomas Cowee going in quite his old form, always ready to nip off for a gate. To me the pleasantest feature of the whole day was to see Mr. Cowee in the pigskin again—able to ride as of yore. Mr. R. S. Tilling—I travelled down from London town with Mr. Tilling—so I know he was there. Mr. S. Fitch, Mr. Harry Savill, Mr. N. Gilbey, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. Harris, of Parndon, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Mrs. L. Pelly, Miss C. Pelly, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Price, Mr. W. Sewell, Mr. A. R. Steele, Mr. G. Buxton, Mrs. F. Ball, Mr. Harrison, Mr. F. Avila, were some of those occupying the good place they generally do when hounds run hard.

At Fyfield the run was by no means over, but the pace was, and it could hardly be called interesting after the lane near Heron's Farm, where Mr. Green, calling out "Ware wheat," led a contingent down the lane, a lane, as it turned out, he had better have stuck to a bit longer, as it led to a ford, and the recovery of hounds running by themselves across the park at Forest Hall, those in direct pursuit of hounds being delayed by the river, so that at a critical moment, beyond the park, when one hound was running the line by herself, Bailey was not there to give any assistance, and Mr. Arkwright, with Mr. Giles acting as whip, could not lay the pack on as quick as he would like to have done.

Another whimper or two beyond the brook, and Bailey had to give it up near Norton Heath—after running exactly one hour. The wind blew searchingly cold after this hot gallop, though it did not seem to affect Sir Charles Smith, who was well up all through this run. I stated in my short personal sketch of him (p. 103, vol. ii.), that he no longer rode across country—at the time I wrote it Sir Charles did not come out—but the season 1899-1900 found him once more as keen a votary of the chase as



Matching Park

ever, much to the satisfaction of every member of the Hunt, and may he not have to relinquish the sport for very many years to come is the sincere wish of us all.

During the day one heard a good deal about the good hunting run our hounds had placed to their credit on the Monday previous following a meet at Bobbingworth Windmill and a morning and afternoon spent in the Ongar Park country. Perhaps, however, I cannot do better than quote *verbatim* Mr. F. Avila's account of this excellent day's sport, which he was good enough to send me :—

Dewley Wood

"A Memorable Day with the Essex Foxhounds.

"March 5th, met Bobbingworth Mill. A perfect hunting morning. The keen bracing air made one feel like going. My pen* can scarcely do justice to this excellent day's sport.

"After drawing Dewley and Greensted Woods blank we trotted off to Knightsland, where Sir Charles Smith found us a fox and hounds, ran him well to Ongar Park, the usual line through those big coverts to Gaynes Park, and back to the end of Ongar Park, Toot Hill side, where he was viewed by a gentleman on foot trying to break away, but owing to high wire netting, the fox could not do so and ran up the covert pointing for Ongar Park Hall, hounds running the line slowly but well. Bailey asked the writer to slip up the ride, which he lost no time in doing and was just in time to see the rascal going away.

"A loud view halloa soon brought Bailey, hounds and field up, and quickly getting on the line they ran beautifully by Greensted House, over Mr. White's Farm, over the brook and to and through Greensted Wood, and skirting Dewley Wood and over Mr. George Brown's farm to the railway, which they crossed, and away to Ongar Park, where they marked him to ground. A very pretty run and thoroughly enjoyed by Messrs. Swire, Giles and W. Sewell, who had decidedly the best of it; Mr. Swire riding a bay horse that it would be hard to beat. I was riding 'Dolly,' late the property of Captain Bruce, and found her a good mount.

"The rest of the morning is hardly worth recording; suffice it to say we were busy up and down Ongar Park, Gaynes Park and the Beachetts. Foxes in plenty, but they would not leave

* Mr. Avila is too modest.—Ed.

these big coverts. At 4 p.m Mr. C. E. Green gave the order to draw Rough Talleys. The field had greatly diminished, as horses had had a tiring day. We hardly expected to find, as hounds being so close all day, we thought the varmint would have taken himself off.

"Bailey changed on to his good roan 'Matching,' and was not long before he had his hounds in covert; they very soon opened, and were rated, as hares were seen, but Mr. Fitch shouted to Mr. Green that he had seen a fox, and, true enough, he was trotting across the plough, a regular cool customer, for half way across the first field *he sat down and had a look round*, as much as to say, 'I don't care for you,' but he did later on.

"Mr. Green, ever alert, at once blew his horn, and Bailey had his hounds out in a trice, and away we went, thinking it would be the same old game, Ongar Park, &c. Hounds ran by the Rifle Butts across the lane into Ongar Park Wood, and going parallel with the lane broke at the top corner through Gaynes Park over Banks's lane. Here Mr. Buxton got a

Greensted Wood

view of him as he tried the drain at the back of Mr. Miller's; he then ran over the road up the grass field towards the Brick Fields and into the Beachetts, and running through the covert broke away by the keeper's lodge (Mr. Avila here remarks that he lost his hat jumping out of the covert, the pace being too good to stop and recover it.—Ed.), and led the field a nice dance over the grass fields, the scene of last year's Point-to-Point. Mr. Waters was going strong at this period of the run, but suggested as hounds flew up the steep hill that they ought to steady, but there was no time for that. After Mr. James Miller's spinney, hounds sank the valley, running through Well Eyes by Barrick Farm, and twenty-acre wood, Mr. Green, Mr. and Mrs. Waters, Mr. and Mrs. W. Sewell, Miss Dorothy Sewell, Mrs. Barron, Mr. G. Buxton, Mr. Swire, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Major Ricardo, all well up and (*sic*)—Oh, by the bye, Mr. Fitch looking superb on his fine grey horse. Here a momentary check occurred, but only momentary, for hounds streamed out over the grass field—it was grand to see them—and running through the next small covert, turned to the right, and ran over Mr. Waltham's big fields to the river, which they crossed (the field riding for Shonks Mill and across Howlett's Hall Farm,* and so to Curtis Mill Green. Through this covert hounds drove their fox and away over Mark Lenny's Farm, the field now being reduced to Bailey, Mrs. Waters, Mrs. Barron, Mr. Swire, Major Ricardo, Mr. Waltham, who had left hounds before this fox was found, but hearing them full cry near his house, jumped on his mare, who had just had a pail of gruel, and joined in, and the writer. Hounds then crossed the road and ran to Pyrgo Big

* One of Mr. F. Avila's Farms.—Ed.

Wood, scarcely entering it, and ran as if for Dagnams, and came to a short and acceptable check in a grass field. Bailey was casting down the lower end of it, next the Dagnam Road, when we noticed a hound, 'Dexter,' cast up the field by himself, and hit it off quite close to where we were standing. It was a grand sight to see him. A hand up to Bailey, failing a hat, and at it again hammer and tongs, and to notice how well Bailey's horse, tired as he was, jumped the next fence, a quickset with a rail through.

"We next ran by Pyrgo Lodge, and leaving Bedfords on the right went to Stone Hall Farm, where we were obliged to leave this good fox to live for another day, as Bailey's horse refused to try any more, and being past six and sixteen miles from the kennels, it was quite time to stop hounds. Those who were at the finish were the huntsman, Mrs. Waters, on an excellent stayer, bought from a gentleman who has gone out to fight for Queen and country; Major Ricardo on his good grey 'General Banks;' and my four-year-old Irish nag 'Shamrock,' who was none the worse for his gruelling, Mr. Waltham on his game chestnut mare, but he had got to the bottom even of her.

"We all repaired to Mrs. Mackintosh's (on the way I managed to secure a cap), who most hospitably entertained us all. Hounds were placed in a loose box with plenty of straw, and were glad of the rest before jogging home, getting to kennels at 9.40. Mr. Buxton came up when it was all over, having found a second horse, and Short, the first whip (who had stayed at Curtis Mill Green with one of the hounds who had run so hard that he had brought on a fit) got up. The rest, with the exception of Mr. Swire and Mrs. Barron, who came as far as Pyrgo, could not get any further than Curtis Mill Green, where the scene was described to be like a battle field."

The Annual Meeting was held at the Green Man, Harlow, on Saturday, March 10th, Lord Rookwood presiding. Mr. Bowlby, to the great regret of all present, said that he should be unable to act as Master next season. The meeting, on the proposition of Mr. G. Buxton, seconded by Mr. C. E. Ridley, was adjourned; a small committee, consisting of the Chairman, Col. Lockwood, Mr. L. Arkwright, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Bevan, Mr. Green, Mr. Buxton, and Mr. J. Todhunter, being appointed to confer with Mr. Bowlby and report to the next meeting.

Mr. Tyndale White resigned the post of Hon. Secretary, which he had held with Mr. Bevan, who was re-elected. Lord Rookwood, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Farmers (which was seconded by Mr. Bowlby), alluded to the loss of their great friend Mr. George Hart,* at the same time moving, on behalf of the members of the Essex Hunt, a vote of condolence to Mr. Hart's sons on the great loss they had sustained in their father's death.

Among those present during the day were:—Mr. E. S. Bowlby, Mr. Arthur Bowlby and his two sisters, Mr. F. Avila, Mr. and Mrs. L. J. W. Arkwright, Mr. W. H. Baddeley, Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Ball, Mr. E. A. Ball, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. F. T. Basham, Mrs. Bennett, Mr. G. Brown, the Misses Blyth (2), Mr. Balfour, Mr. G. Buxton, Mr. S. Caldwell, Mr. Carr, Mrs. W. R. Clarke, Mr. E. Cockett, Mr. Walter Cook, Mrs. Weston Crocker, Mr. Weston Crocker driving (he had unfortunately broken a small bone in his leg a few days previously, the result of a hunting accident), Mr. P. M. Evans, Mr. W. M. Galloway, Mr. H. P. Gee, Mr. Guy Gilbey driving, Mr. Newman Gilbey, Mr. Tresham Gilbey, Miss E. Gilbey, Mrs. Hine, Miss Gold, Mr. G. Gold, Mr. F. Green, Miss M. Green, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. James Green, of Todds Brook, Mr. D. Gregory, Mr. H. Fardell, Mr. R. E. Johnston, Mr. W. S. Horner, Miss E. Jones, Mr. Kennett, Mr. J. Kirkby, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. Lobb, Mr. V. Nickalls, Mr. A. Peel, Miss Peel, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Miss E. Pelly, Mr. E. Pelly, Major Ricardo, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. and Mrs. W. Sewell, Miss D. Sewell, Mr. A. Sewell, Mr. S. Single, Mr. A. B. Sorrell, Mr. D. Cunliffe Smith, Mr. A. R. Steele,

* Mr. Hart was within three weeks of attaining his seventy-sixth birthday, when, after a short illness of a week, he passed away on February 17th, quite peacefully in his sleep; so peacefully that one of his sons who was present with him did not know when sleep ended and Life began.—Ed.

Miss Steele, Mr. C. V. Thorneycroft, Mr. J. Todhunter, Mr. B. E. Todhunter, Mr. T. J. Howard, Mr. H. J. Miller, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Waters, General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Capt. H. W. W. Wood, Mr. E. W. Young.

Although it was a perfect day for riding about, it was by no means a good one for sport, scent being at a discount, consequently hounds could do little with a fox (one of a leash) found in Latton Park, which they came away with to Parndon Woods, beyond disturbing some of the best coverts, and a long morning was spent in vain looking for another fox.

At 3 p.m., as there appeared but little prospect of finding a fox for some time and having to catch a train to town, I started to hack back with my man. We had hounds some distance off on our left as we rode homewards through the fields by Todd's Brook and Northbrooks. Almost directly we had passed Mr. Steele's house I viewed a lovely dark fox, one of the richest-coated ones I have ever seen; his fur was as thick as a colley dog's and shone like polished bronze, and his brush swept the ground, as he ran up the furrow of the ploughed field into the corner of a small adjoining spinney. I am afraid that all thoughts of catching my train vanished to the winds as we both commenced holloaing (I must say William has a fine voice), mine soon gave out; luckily we attracted the attention of Major Ricardo in the distance, who passed it on, and it reached Bailey in the Parndon Hall coverts, and he got a view of the fox as he galloped breaking from the small spinney into which I had viewed him. Hounds did not settle to run before they had left Passmores behind, and then they pushed on very nicely as far as Kingsmores without a pause. A slight check at the covert beyond, and as Bailey made his cast, Mr. Green, who was keeping the crowd in check at a gateway, caused some amusement by calling, "Yarboro', don't press them," and receiving the answer from that individual who happened to be standing behind him—"*Adsum*."

Taking the line up by the side of Parndon Woods, hounds worked it back through the woods to Passmores, where at 4 p.m. I had to leave them and managed to catch the 5.30 up to town, after a very enjoyable hunt of fifty minutes.

One never enjoys a run more than when you have been the first to view the fox. You acquire at once a sort of proprietary interest in him, and experience in some small measure some of the enthusiasm a huntsman feels whose aim it is to catch his fox when he has found him.

A poor day's sport fell to my lot at my next venture, when hounds met near Bentley Church, on Wednesday, March 14, for after dragging through all the Weald Hall, Dagnam, and Pyrgo Woods coverts — even Mr. Docwra's gorse failed us; also Mrs. McIntosh and Sir Charles Smith's osiers, and Colonel Lockwood's preserves—I had to leave hounds (at 4 p.m.) still hoping to avert the blank. Nor did I quite appreciate the feelings of a man who declared a blank day with fox hounds was worth a good day with stag hounds. We had only a small field out, including a sprinkling of the followers of the Essex Union. I subsequently learnt from Mr. Tilling that hounds found in Gaynes Park at 5.15, and ran on in the neighbourhood of the woods until it was dark. Mr. Tilling was thinking of leaving at 6.30 to catch his usual train at 7.30, when Mr. Green remarked, "Oh, stay and see it out." "See it out?" said Mr. Tilling, "You can't see anything, only hear 'em!" The fading light probably accounted for two little croppers in this evening gallop, one to Mr. S. Caldwell, the other to Mr. H. Sworder, whose horse pitched head over heels as he landed in a new-made drain. On the following Monday, March 19, hounds met at Kelvedon Common, and searched the whole country side in vain for a fox, a blank day having to be recorded.

Wednesday, March 21, Toot Hill.—A perfect day for hunting, keen easterly wind with rising glass, the going on the heavy side from the recent fall of snow. I was afraid that I should have to record another blank, so short of foxes are we in our Monday country—Greensted Wood, Knightsland, Northlands, Beachetts, Gaynes Park, Rough Talleys, were tried in vain—and it was 2 p.m. before hounds found in the Lower Forest, in a covert that belongs to no private owner but to the people of London, more particularly the East End of London—the identical spot near the gravel pits.

Crossing the line the fox took a turn towards Woodside, quickly retracing his steps and with hounds close at him ran through Smith's Wood and went away up the hill (jumping out of the wood both Mr. F. Basham and Mr. Marriage came to grief over the wire netting) past Coopersale House. When hounds crossed the line it was a toss up which side of Ginger's Wood* to go. Mr. Avila and the majority turned off to

The Merry Fiddlers

the right, the huntsman and a few of us going to the left for Theydon Grove. Here another fox was probably put up, for hounds divided, three and a half couple coming away at once over the line by Stonard's Farm, very few grasping the fact that they had done so, as the huntsman was back again with the body of the pack, and for all we knew the men who were riding three or four fields ahead were only riding to turn the railway. Mr. E. Ball however, caught sight of a few hounds, and another man calling out "the man† in the black coat has them," Mr. Giles and Mr.

* Mr. Ginger farms the land round this covert. Mr. Avila used to hold it succeeding Mr. Watson. Watson's, Avila's, now Ginger's Wood.—Ed.
† Mr. Fitch.

Tyndale White set to work to catch them, nor did they hesitate a second at the trappy jump in and out of Stew Green, to which more than one horse demurred, and caught hounds just beyond, to find Mr. Fitch and Mr. Young leading, Mr. Young being the first into the road and out over the rotten banked brook, Mr. Harris' horse nearly coming down with him as he essayed it. Mrs. Willie Sewell on Jack was over with the first half dozen who tackled it.

Hounds (the three and a half couple) flew along up the hill to Mr. Flux's farm, crossed his ride and ran on past Gardener's farm, Mr. Fitch going very strong on the right with Mr. Cecil Savill, Mr. Harris and Mr. Giles, Mr. Young, Mr. Tyndale White and his son, with Mrs. W. Sewell laying up close on the left. Crossing the line below Gardener's Farm, hounds got away from everyone owing to the delay at the railway gates, but were caught in the forest, through which they ran most beautifully up to Copped Hall Lodge gates, bringing their fox back with a will, and running handsomely into him in an open part of the forest, just short of the Theydon road. Forty-five minutes best pace, a very pretty hunt and a very pretty performance, to find a fox in the Lower Forest* and after a few miles in the open to kill him in the Upper Forest. The keen wind made itself felt after this hot gallop, and there was a run on the refreshments at several houses in Epping before Bailey went on with hounds to Weald Coppice and other likely coverts, to draw on till nearly six without finding again.

North East wind with snow showers was a true forecast for the last Monday in March, 1900, on which day our hounds met at Epping Long Green at 12 o'clock. The card said 11, and several luckless individuals, including Mr. Ralph Bury, arrived an hour too soon, to shiver in the icy blast, but they were soon warmed into action when Bailey got news of a fox below Orange Wood, and slipping away quickly from the covert, laid hounds on the line of a traveller. There was a scramble at the ford through the Cobbin Brook, and a good many refusals at the fence beyond, a wattled hedge with a wide ditch, which brought Bailey to grief; only the top of his horse's head could be seen as he lay in the ditch. A stranger† on a long-tailed bay got over first, quickly followed by Short, Mr. C. E. Green and Mr. Swire.

Two fields beyond the brook hounds checked. The stranger sitting still, waiting for them to pick it up, caught my eye, and the huntsman's cry (not quite liking a stranger to have such a prominent place) "'Ware wire," caught my ear.

At the small plantation on the Bury Farm hounds hung fire and failed to carry the line beyond Griffin's Wood, affording time before they found again to take stock of some of those who were out. The Master, Mr. E. S. Bowlby, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright, Mr. Arthur Bowlby, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Mr. E. A. Ball, Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Ball, Mr. F. T. Basham, Mr. T. R. Hull, Mr. G. Buxton, Major Ricardo, Mr. and Miss Waters, Mr. Ralph Bury, Mr. Henry Buxton, Miss Buxton, Mr. J. Green, Mr. F. Green, Mr. L. Pelly, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Miss Pelly, Mr. W. Sewell, Miss Dorothy Sewell, Mr. E. Cockett, Mr. J. Todhunter, Mr. Walter Cook, Mr. A. Flint, Mr. J. Swire, Turner, the Huntsman to the Enfield Chase Stag Hounds. Mr. Arthur Sewell, Mr. Howard, of Epping, Mr. W. S. Horner, Mr. H. E. Jones, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. C. Savill, Miss Savill, Mr. Harris, Mr. John White.

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* The Town of Epping divides Epping Forest, the smaller portion is known as the Lower Forest.—Ed.

† Mr. C. Lane Fox.

Our next find was at Galley Hills, which, as usual, was full of foxes. Breaking the Monkhams end our fox took a very good line, going up the hill and turning to the left for Obelisk Wood. Hounds ran very smartly to Shatter Bushes. A field from the covert, hearing a splash, I looked round and saw young Hull in the middle of a pond, luckily not a very deep one, and he managed to scramble out the right side. Not dwelling a second in these coverts hounds slipped along towards Nasing Coppice, and then swung to the right towards Balls Hill, Mr. Gerald Buxton kindly demolishing a hurdle with a bad take off, which most of the horses who came to it were too blown to jump.

One at a time over an awkward bottom, Mr. Sewell on his chestnut, finding a place for himself on the left, we rose the hill and then galloped down to the covert (Balls Hill) the gate out was securely fastened, and as the huntsman and whip jumped off to unhinge it, the stranger on the bay scrambled his way out of the covert and quickly found his own way in and out of the road. Two or three fields further on, at Hunter's Hall, hounds threw up, and although Bailey worked out a line as far as the old Church, the fun was over, and there was time to exchange a lame horse for a sound one before we went on to Nasing Coppice and Deer Park, to find in the latter covert and run through Galley Hills to ground below Monkhams, and spend a very pleasant hour or two on the grass country that stretches below Hollyfield Hall to Galley Hills.

The afternoon run from Latton Park on Wednesday, March 28, was about the best (speaking personally) I had this season.

Meeting at 12 o'clock at Moreton we went off at once to look for the hero of the cabbage field, near Little Laver Mill, a fox that Mr. L. Marriage informed me had already afforded three good gallops.

It was curious to note the eagerness with which everyone closed up as Bailey, blowing his horn, galloped up to the roots with his hounds. But although the customer was not at home, we found him in the covert over the road, the famous covert of Brick Kilns. Breaking the north side we thought that we were in for a stinger as hounds flew along over the first two fields. Mr. Young, Mr. Avila, Mr. C. Fitch, Mr. Swire, Mr. David Christy, jun., on a recent purchase, a very likely looking bay horse, all eager for a start as they followed the Huntsman sharp in and out of the Grange drive. But although everything pointed to a good scent—easterly wind, rising glass and ground saturated with the snow of overnight—hounds could not work out the various twists, evidently on the wrong fox as a brace came away from Brick Kilns, and too late they heard of the hero of previous runs running through his old camping ground, the root field. The cast Bailey made to get there must have taken in a couple of miles of country, done, too, almost at a hand gallop, so fast did he go; a waggoner's team doing a bolt near High Laver causing no little excitement as we galloped down the road.

At Little Laver Mill in the morning we little expected to be at Galley Hills (the scene of Monday's exploits) in the afternoon, the points some fifteen miles apart. But how this came to pass you shall learn if you care to read the following notes. Most of Monday's field were out with the following additions :—

Mr. Crossman, just back from the Meynell country, riding his wife's beautiful black, which I believe on a recent occasion in a very fast fifty minutes with the Meynell, ridden by her fair owner, tailed off every horse, not excepting the four or five out of a large field who were able to keep near the hounds for the first forty minutes.

Miss Woodhouse, Mr. Weston Crocker, Rev. L. Capel-Cure and the

Misses Capel-Cure (2), Miss L. Bowlby, Miss Mary Gower, Mr. Gee, Mr. Giles, Mr. B. E. Todhunter, Mr. T. J. Howard, Mr. Raby, Mr. L. Marriage, Mr. T. D. Whitehead, General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Mr. F. Ball, Mr. A. Waters, Mr. Tyndale White, Mr. A. W. Craig, Mr. R. S. Tilling, Mr. S. Fitch, Mr. George Brown, Miss M. Green, Mr. Fardell, Mr. T. R. Hull, Miss Ethel Jones, Mr. R. C. Lyall, Miss M. Morgan, Mr. E. Pelly, Mr. E. Quare, the Misses Quare (2), Miss C. Pelly, Mr. G. Harris, Mr. A. R. Steele, Miss Fane, Mr. E. W. Young.

Man Wood, the Gorse Down Hall (Mr. Bowlby told me that already there were two litters of cubs in the Down Hall coverts), and Man Wood were drawn without a whimper, also some rough field below Matching

The Axe and Compasses

Park and the kennels, when at 3.15 we found ourselves at Latton Park. Hounds had scarcely been in covert a minute before a vigorous view holloa in the direction of Rundells Grove set us all on the gallop, and immediately afterwards, as we gathered near the keeper's house, a beautiful dog fox broke in full view at the bottom of Rundells Grove and went away as straight as an arrow across the big wheat field towards Rye Hill.

In the meantime hounds were back with the vixen, but Mr. Green kept his horn going, and he laid hounds on at the gallop; the moment they touched the line you could tell there was a scent, as heads up and sterns down they drove along; and those who had got through the wire netting that surrounded the field, and those who were with Mr. Green, including Mr. T. J. Howard on his grey, converged for the corner of the field. It would have puzzled a stranger to have found a way out of the field into the lane. There was only one weak spot and we knew it, and very little room either between the trees of the fence; my whip was torn out of my

hand, and there was no time to retrieve it as the men charged through the fence in quick succession, Mr. Howard cutting his face badly in the boughs. Mr. F. Green, to avoid the wire, had led a contingent up the side of the wood, and was already coming down the lane with a wet sail. Hounds simply flew along it, turning out sharp to the right towards Parndon at a place where you couldn't follow them. A gallop of a hundred yards further down the lane put you on the high road, and gave you the command of hounds as they swept over the grass towards the road and checked for an instant at this sudden turn. Bailey had them on the line at once. Those on top of the hill with Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. Arkwright, Mr. F. Green, Mr. E. Pelly, Mr. Giles, having a decided pull over those on the right who had to get in and out of the Marles Farm lane, and to shake their horses out, to overtake hounds as they flew round the edge of the big wheat field that runs up to the woods.

Straight for Marles, the identical line, the identical fence we had in the great run on March 17th, 1894 (see sketch, p. 270, vol. i.). Twenty abreast they went at the stiff quickset fence. The Admiral, the huntsman, Mr. Howard, Mr. F. Green, Mr. Arkwright, Mr. C. Fitch, Mr. Crossman, Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Mr. Avila, among them. The fence, a cut down blackthorn, strong with the growth of years, and with a down-hill approach, would not stand trifling with, and woe betide the horse that struck the stubs. Mr. Fitch's good grey cleared it but pitched head over heels on landing, unable to carry his rider's weight at the pace he was going, breaking his rider's collar bone, and losing him the finishing days of the season. Straight through Marles and a momentary check in the road beyond. Luckily, Mr. C. E. Green was there to hold the keen thrusters. Hitting it off, hounds soon put a field between themselves and their nearest pursuers, Mr. F. Green, the Admiral, the huntsman and Short. Where are the light weights? queried the Admiral and Mr. F. Green, as hounds flew along parallel with the road leaving Epping Church on the left; if the Admiral had glanced round he would have seen Mr. Arkwright, Mr. Giles, Mr. Avila, Howard and half-a-dozen more laying close up on the right. Another sharp turn just short of Chamber's Farm. Hounds overshot it, but Bailey quickly laid them on, and Mr. F. Green held the gap in the corner of the next field until they had settled to the line.

Leaving Orange Wood on the right hounds slipped along down the grass meadows towards the Cobbin brook; Sir Evelyn Wood, Mr. Swire, Mr. John White and a few more on the left making for a ford; but a sudden turn of hounds parallel with the brook into the plantation running towards the keeper's house made them alter their course, only to find themselves with the rest of the hunt cornered by some unjumpable rails by the plantation in which hounds were feathering. A few valuable minutes were lost here before the rails were demolished and the huntsman and staff got through. In the meantime, Mr. L. Pelly and Mr. G. Buxton, anticipating the block, had already slipped round. Almost immediately the hounds picked up the line by the brook, and we splashed through the same ford we had splashed through the previous Monday; but how different looked the fence beyond, not a vestige of the wattled hedge remaining at one gap, but all the same Bailey remarked that he was nearly down again, as we steered for the next ditch and bank, and jumped them at the slant, as hounds pressed on up the hill and made for the plantation on the Bury Farm to take quite a new line beyond up to the Bury Farm. Some curious fences had to be negotiated in the follow-my-leader fashion as we turned right-handed and jumped in and out of the lane near New Farm; Mr. George Brown finding a way for those on the right, his bold bay horse

simply forcing his way through the stiff quickset fence. A field beyond the lane Mr. Avila, who was riding a very good little mare, "Dolly," which had been given to him by Captain Bruce, came to grief as the mare, catching her legs in a binder, turned head over heels. Mr. F. Green promptly went to the rescue, as Mr. Avila was hung up. Some whisky and soda soon revived him, and he went sailing along in the wake of hounds as if nothing had happened. A youth in mufti, a stranger to me, having first shy at the next wattled fence on the top of a bank, luckily the binders broke, as the fence could not be flown, and there was hardly room to double it. The youth, however, shot ahead too far and got cornered at the next fence as hounds ran on hard for the Warren, with Mr. Avila and Mr. Gerald Buxton leading the van. Hounds ran beautifully through the Warren, and their fox failing to get over the high palings ran past the lodge gates, and getting out in the park made for Copped Hall Green. No one caring to tackle the park palings (we wanted Mr. Sheffield Neave to show us the way), Mr. C. E. Green was perfectly happy, and so was Bailey, for hounds had plenty of room as they ran, on by themselves and we didn't catch them until they came to a check in Warlies Park. Mr. C. E. Green, insisting upon the ambulance, *i.e.*, Mr. F. Avila's conveyance, going first at the one at a time places, of which there were three or four if you took the line hounds did and followed Mr. Arkwright and Mr. C. E. Green over the drop on to Copped Hall Green.

From Warlies hounds ran very smartly to Cobbin End, Mr. Howard, of Epping, going very strong on his chestnut. At the end of the run Mr. Howard told me that he would not sell the horse for £200; he could drive him single and drive him double, and hunt him three or four days a week. Crossing the brook by the ford, Mr. Bevan and Mr. Crossman splashing through with the first come first served contingent, hounds ran on towards Obelisk Wood, just missing it, and rose the hill beyond Shatter Bushes, a quickset fence at this period causing a good many refusals, until Captain Wood came to the rescue. I saw three horses run their heads into the opposite bank rather than attempt the jump. Short was one, and he looked (you know how Short looks, if you hunt with the Essex, when his horse refuses), and you know that his horse will have to tumble into or over the fence rather than be allowed to get his own way, as Short, though a very judicious rider is a very determined one, with plenty of North Countrie grit in him.

If hounds had run on now at the pace they had started you would not have reached the Galley Hill coverts, Messrs. Lee and Crossman, in the easy way you went trotting up that last field with the pack, still less have come away again when they brought their fox once more over a delightful line of country by Shatter Bushes, the Rookery and Griffins Wood, to lose him in the Warren, a forest fox undoubtedly. Several, including Miss Woodhouse, who went splendidly in the run, Mr. C. E. Ridley, Mr. David Christy, jun., and Mr. Gee, in spite of their long distance from home, stuck to it to the end of the two hours run.

For the last day of the season, 1899-1900, hounds met at Birch Hall, Mr. Gerald Buxton's house, on the outskirts of Epping Forest. Twenty years previously the last meet of the season was held higher up in the Forest, two miles nearer London, at Goldings, where Colonel Howard was living. Not a large muster for the last day, the counter-attractions of Stag Hounds at Matching Hall doubtless attracting some; just a hundred;

"In a run this season near Bedfords, Mr. Sheffield Neave jumped some high park palings (solid boards) with ditch beyond and a bit of a drop *into a road*. He had no followers.—Ed.

Through Epping Town, en route to Birch Hall

I took the trouble to count them as they trooped past me in the road below Mr. Buxton's wood, and the hundred included several very pretty little girls, two of Mr. Wahab's in brown covert coats with velvet caps to match; Miss Lucy Green and Mrs. Bennett's little girl, in red Tam o'Shanters, neither of them in their teens, but all the same looking very much at home on their ponies; Miss Melles, with her father, about his first visit to the hunting field this season. Mr. W. H. Baddelely and his little girl. Mrs. Gerald Buxton was driving, Mr. Avila was also on wheels, driving the animal that had put him down in Wednesday's run, when he sprained both his wrists. Mr. F. Green, jun., was on a hireling of Kett's. A few others whose names I recall I will add, with apologies to the many whose names I have omitted: Mr. E. S. Bowlby, Mr. Arthur Bowlby, Mr. and Mrs. Arkwright, Mr. C. E. Green, Mr. R. Y. Bevan, Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., Mr. A. R. Steele, Mr. and Mrs. W. Sewell, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Waters, Mr. Young, Mr. Lane Fox, Mr. G. H. Lee, Mr. H. Sworder, Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Ball, Mr. F. Green, Miss M. Green, Mr. H. J. Miller, Mr. H. Sworder; Miss T. Buxton, just back from Florence; Mr. G. Buxton, Mr. Whitehead, Mr. J. G. Pelly, Miss Pelly, Mr. W. Sims-Horner (on wheels), Mr. Ralph Bury, Mr. Rickett, Mr. Seal, Mr. Freeman, Mr. Fardell, Mr. D. Cunliffe-Smith, Mr. Capel-Cure, Mr. L. Savill, Miss Savill, Capt. Wood, Mr. E. Lobb, Mr. and Mrs. Crossman. None of them so lucky as Mr. A. Giles, Mr. Howard and Mr. Todhunter, who, taking time by the forelock and making sure of a gallop, went out with stag hounds before joining the fox hunters at 4 p.m., for they arrived in time to see us find our first fox in Harlow Park, and avoided the long weary draw through endless coverts. A dead vixen could hardly be called a find; though the catastrophe of finding one dead in a trap in his wood, the Beachetts, evoked the sympathy of one and all with Mr. G. Buxton, for the vixen had cubs. Gaynes Park, Rough Talleys, coverts that have stood the hunt in good stead this season, failed this day, and General Sir Evelyn Wood had had to bid an adieu to the chase before we found at Harlow Park. A fine grey fox, not the red-brown customer we found on Wednesday, crossed the road for Latton, and going out at the bottom end of Rundell's Grove at starting took the same line as Wednesday's fox, and many began to think that they were in for a repetition of Wednesday's sport. But it was evident before we had crossed the first field that there was not the same scent. Two days of an easterly wind had dried the ground and hounds could not run a yard, but Bailey managed to work out a line to and through Parndon Woods, and a few fields beyond, before going to look for a fresh one in Nasing Coppice. The certainty of a find in Galley Hills induced a good many to stay on, although it was quite 5.30 before they got there, and they were rewarded with a very nice gallop on the grass up to the Forest, losing their fox quite near to the scene of the morning's meet. This was the third time this week hounds had paid a visit to Galley Hills.

None enjoyed this gallop more than Mr. Whitehead; in spite of his eighteen stone his mare carried him right through the run as well as she had carried him on the previous Wednesday, and catching the 7 o'clock train for town, he went home in the best of spirits, in spite of regrets that the season was over with our hounds—a season which, in spite of a paucity of foxes in many parts of the country (partly accounted for on the score of mange) has on the whole been a very good one, marked by many stirring runs, though, had it not been for Mr. Green's keenness to stay out while daylight lasted, many of the best gallops would never have come off. If Essex men never get a worse season than 1899-1900, they will never have any cause to grumble.

"Berserker," by "Berserker," bred by Lord Harrington, was allowed by that great judge of hunters, the Master of the South Notts, to be one of the best he ever owned, and as far as my limited experience goes, he was worth every penny of the 400 guineas he fetched at the hammer. A rare stayer, in the six seasons he has carried me in Essex I have never bottomed him, though perhaps it is only fair to add that I have never given him more than half days. Like all well-bred ones,

"Berserker"

coming out of the grass countries in the Midlands (where I first rode him) he very soon learnt the Essex banks and ditches, and could pull himself together and jump the widest of them in three strides; or if you galloped him at them would just clip over them without overjumping himself, and to sit on his back was like sitting in an armchair, so easy was his jumping, resembling, in that respect (I have been told) all "Berserker's" stock.

I have often been asked how I came to adopt the *nom-de-plume* McAdam. It is easily explained. My father, whose portrait on one of his favourite hunters accompanies this short sketch, was particularly fond of a gallop with hounds. In his day the fashion of lingering over the nuts and the port had not altogether died out, and many a run was discussed and many an incident of the chase recalled when the fire shone bright on the old hearth, and the rich Falernian sparkled in the glass, and some of these scenes I would occasionally jot down and send

Rev. Richard Yerburgh on "Rufus"

to *The Field* under the *pseudonym* McAdam,* a name suggested by the partiality shown by the old governor in the winter months for the creation of that inventive genius "Macadam" of which he had such a righteous horror in the summer, for with a merry twinkle in his eye he would remark that he could hardly ever go out for a quiet ride on the road, however late in the day, without meeting the hounds.†

* *See* Appendix a "*Day with the Belvoir*."
† *Vide* Appendix, "Letter from Frank Gillard."

How and where he was tempted to leave it he would point out in some walk, though in these rambles he never got quite so far as the spot where, on the occasion of the Prince of Wales honouring a meet of the Blankney or Belvoir Hounds with his presence, he had the honour of giving his Royal Highness a lead over a fence to which his horse had demurred, as the dear old boy subsequently remarked "I ought to have been made a Bishop on the spot."

Allowed to be one of the best judges of a horse in Lincolnshire, and a great lover of the noble animal, many a good one found its way from Horncastle Fair or the North of England into his stable. One in particular which was bought by the late Robert Chapman of Cheltenham in October, 1867, and sold the following month to the Duke of Beaufort, was acknowledged by His Grace to be one of the best hunters he ever rode.*

Small wonder, then, that I clung with some affection to my *pseudonym* McAdam, which revived such pleasant memories of scenes long past.

* *See* Appendix "Letter from Duke of Beaufort."

Thoby Priory

CHAPTER XI.

Thoby Priory—Mr. Vickerman's Diary—Covert Side by Wm. and Hy. Barraud —"Carlow"—"Chancellor"—Jim Cassidy—Mr. Conyer's Eccentricities—His Concern for Mr. Vickerman—The Pulling "Cognac"—His Jumping Feats—Mr. Vickerman's Patent Bit—Frederick Beckington—Season 1844-45 —Hunting Caps—The great Row Wood Run—Gate Jumping—How to live to Eighty—Drag Hunting—Falls—Sam Adams's Stag Hounds—Root Ditches —Conyers Meets at Laindon Hills—The Purchase of "Cognac"—At the Harboro' Hotel, Melton, Nov., 1846—Kirby Gate—Cream Gorse—Mr. Greene of Rolleston—Lord Strathmore—Sir Richard Sutton—Mr. Finch, M.P.—Burley-on-the-Hill—Ben Morgan—Old Goosey.

HAVING come to the end of my hunting notes, on the principle of reserving the best for the last I now add the following extracts taken from the very interesting hunting journals which the late Charles Ranken Vickerman (Secretary for twenty years to the Essex Stag Hounds) kept with such care and accuracy for a period extending over fifty years, prefacing the same with his description of his well known horses "Carlow" and "Cognac," whose portraits, together with that of his faithful servant Frederick Beckington taken from the painting "Covert Side" by William and Henry Barraud, will be found facing page 314.

"COVERT-SIDE," BY WM. AND HY. BARRAUD.

1846.

"CARLOW."

A rich brown horse, 15 hds., 3½ inc., bred in County Carlow (whence his name), began life as a racehorse on the Curragh of Kildare. He was brought over to Melton Mowbray by the then Earl of Howth about the best light weight rider of his day, and hunted with the Quorn, Belvoir, and Pytchley hounds, establishing a reputation which survived long after he had left that country. He was sold for £500 (a large price in those days) for steeplechasing, and won many good races, including the Hare-brained Moonlight S. C., got up by the regiment when in garrison at Windsor.

After many vicissitudes he was sold at Tattersall's and realised but a small price, chiefly owing to his being vicious in the stable. The purchaser was a sporting farmer and miller in Essex, but though a strong, powerful man, he was quite unable to ride the horse with hounds, even after "bucketing" him round a ploughed field before starting. They had to cast him before clipping or administering a ball.

At the end of his first season in Essex he was sold to Jim Morgan, the hard-riding huntsman of "The Essex Hounds," under the Mastership of Henry John Conyers, of Copt Hall, near Epping, who kept the hounds, chiefly at his own expense, for quite forty years. Fortunately Jim Morgan was unable to produce the purchase money, and sold his bargain to Mr. Vickerman, then residing at Blackmore Priory, for a small consideration.

"Carlow" suited his new purchaser "down to the ground." Though a tremendous puller, naturally of a jealous temperament, intensified by racing and chasing, and unable to tolerate a horse in front of him, yet properly bitted (with a twisted snaffle and "gridiron" bit of the owner's invention), and ridden with a light hand, *first in his own line*, he was perfection, and distinguished himself equally over the "yawners" or "ready-made graves" (as they used to be termed) of The Roothings; the stone walls of the Heythrop and Vale of White Horse, and the Bullfinches and Oxers of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. Mr. Vickerman writes:—

"Kind and firm treatment made him so fond of my stud groom that the latter would frequently go alone *in the dark* into his box and give him a ball without difficulty.

On the first occasion of hunting him from Melton, with the

Charles Ranken Vickerman on "Carlow"

Frederick Beckington with "Chancellor"

(From the painting by W. and H. Barraud, 1834.)

Quorn, we had an early find, and good run of nearly an hour, over a very stiff country. Only a select few out of an enormous field could live with the hounds, among whom "Carlow" was conspicuous. After the run, while jogging on to the next covert, I was politely accosted by one of the leading members who thought he recognised my horse. My replies to his enquiries satisfied him that his recollection was correct, and he then told me of the horse's performances in former days, and introduced me to his friends—some who had seen, and others who had only heard of him. In fact, "Carlow" was quite an introduction to the *élite* of the Hunt, who without him would not have noticed a young man and a stranger, as I was at that time.

Those were the days of Sir Richard Sutton, Henley Greaves, George Payne, Earl of Wilton, Col. Wyndham (who was with the Scots Greys at Waterloo), Hon. Captain Maynard (father of Lady Warwick), Little Gilmour, Stirling Crawfurd, Frank Geary, Sir Thomas Whichcote, Earl of Strathmore, Lord Gardner, &c., &c. All were very kind and nice, with the exception of the last named, who did not relish being deprived of his "pride of place" by a young stranger, and being unmercifully chaffed by his companions in consequence.

"Carlow" had very fine bright eyes, and a wonderful "eye to hounds." On one occasion, soon after I had bought him, he was "sailing away" broadside of the hounds, on their left, when they suddenly turned away to the right. He instantly turned with them, and with such suddenness that I was not far from being unshipped.

He was an old horse when his portrait was painted in 1846, by the two brothers, William and Henry Barraud, of Park Street, Grosvenor Square—the former depicting the landscape and quadrupeds, and the latter the bipeds. William Barraud told me that "Carlow" had made him do what he had not done for twenty years, viz., measure the horse's neck and his own canvas; fearing his eye had deceived him and that he had got it too long. But he was quite right. His neck was unusually long, with a beautiful shoulder and high withers, and magnificent quarters. He was a difficult horse to sit over a wall with a drop—being a "pitchy" jumper—going close up to the wall and giving a tremendous "lash out" in the air with his powerful quarters. Henry Barraud especially admired my top-boots. The different cut of coat and leathers from the present is noticeable.

Determined that "Carlow" should never get again into bad

hands, I turned him out on my brother's farm in Essex to "end his days in peace." He managed to get to some spring-tares and gorged himself so greedily that he died.

"CHANCELLOR."

The chestnut gelding in the picture had been ridden by his owner to the place appointed near to the fixture, and was about to return home after some instructions given to the groom. His height was 15.1, with good substance. He had carried a lady, as hack only, until he had bucked her off, whereupon I became his purchaser. He had plenty of pluck and courage, but had never seen a hound nor a fence.

In those early youthful days I had a theory which I carried into practise, viz., that it was as natural for a horse to jump as to trot or gallop, and that it only required nerve on the part of the rider to make him, *at once*, into a hunter. Intending to hunt with the Essex hounds the ensuing season, and not then residing in the county, I sent this horse and another to the "Sun and Whalebone," Harlow Bush, kept by that good old sportsman, Jem Cassidy, formerly jockey, and afterwards trainer to the Marquis of Exeter.

Having been forewarned of some of the eccentricities of the Master, Henry John Conyers, I rode up to him at my first meet, and prefacing that I understood there was no Secretary to the Hunt, I added that I proposed to have the pleasure of hunting with his hounds and would be glad to be informed of the name of his bankers. He was all smiles and politeness. "Thankee, sir, much obleeged to you, sir. My bankers are Messrs. Childs of Temple Bar."

We had a good day's sport, two or three good runs, but the ditches very blind and deceptive. I acted upon my theory and rode "Chancellor" to the front, with the inevitable result that I had three or four falls, regular "crumpellers." Mr. Conyers happening to see one of these falls and hear of the others, called out, in feigned alarm, to those around him, "Will none of you take care of that little gentleman in the cap? He has asked for the name of my bankers, but I fear he will never *live* to get there." This story stuck to me for fully twenty years afterwards.

"Chancellor" speedily matured into a brilliant hunter. Jem Cassidy declared that he was about the best, for his inches, that he had ever ridden with hounds.

The stud groom in the picture was as good in his way as the horses. His name was Frederick Beckington and he

began life, while a lad, as whip, or second horseman, to Sir Bellingham Graham's Harriers in Yorkshire. He was thirty-two years with me and died while in my service. He loved his horses and took infinite care of them. His wife used to complain that he thought much more of his horses than of his children. On more than one occasion I have happened to go to the stables supposing all had gone home for the night, when on entering I saw Beckington stripped to his shirt sleeves, bathed in sweat, and dressing a favourite hunter.

On rather chiding him for letting his understrappers go home before finishing their work, he explained that the horse had not been done to his satisfaction and so he preferred to do him over again himself. It need hardly be added that the horse's coat was then shining like satin, as he showed it to me with honest pride.

"Cognac."

At that time I had three other hunters, namely, "Cognac," "Champagne," and "Circe." The two latter were capital hunters, but with no special features. "Cognac" was, however, a more wonderful horse than even "Carlow," and was, without exception, the grandest water-jumper I ever saw or possessed. I have jumped rivers and the main Fen-Dyke, beyond Grantham in Lincolnshire, and the Down Hall, Leaden, and other brooks in Essex and the Vale of Aylesbury, in places where they had never been jumped before and very probably never since.

A moat on the farm of John Webb, of Hatfield Town, near Dunmow, had always been voted impracticable, but was seen by John Webb to be cleared by "Cognac" in gallant style. At another place in the Roothings where two fences and wide ditches crossed at right angles, I was rash enough to ride him at their junction, but he jumped the lot, clearing a distance, measured the next day, of 36 feet.

On another occasion, riding home from hunting with that good sportsman and neat rider, Horatio Kidd, of Nine Ashes, Blackmore, he said to me, "You have jumped everything except a road. *Do* be able to say you have jumped a *road*."

We were near home at that time, after a hard day, and in a deep narrow road. So I jumped out of the road, took him some fifty yards into the field and sent him at it, when he cleared the two fences and intervening road magnificently.

Unfortunately, he had no mouth, and pulled frightfully, but I succeeded with him where everyone before me who had tried

had failed. Some of his performances and my own, have been noticed in *Baily's Magazine*. The secret of my success lay chiefly in having discarded the cruelly severe bits in which he had been ridden, and substituting a bit of my own contrivance, consisting of a large thick *plain* snaffle-bit attached to a wide strong pair of reins with stops. To this was added my favourite gridiron-bit, with a short buckled rein which lay on the horse's neck. I invariably rode him on the snaffle only, except when I wanted him to shorten his stride on approaching a road or any cramped place, when I just laid hold of the buckled-rein with the two forefingers of my right hand, releasing his head immediately he answered to my hand.

He got so used to this that sometimes when I failed to get hold of the rein, owing to its being entangled in his mane, he would feel my fingers fumbling on his crest and pull himself together, just as if I had checked him with the rein.

I have seen it discussed whether a horse in jumping, ever alights on his hind legs before his fore legs. Of course the great majority of horses do not, but there are exceptions and "Cognac" was one of them. At the first wide Roothing fence I rode him over I thought he must have jumped short, so at the second fence I turned round and looked behind, as he landed, and saw that he had cleared the ditch by a yard and more. The peculiarity of feeling was owing to his having landed *first* on his hind feet. He did not always do it, chiefly when he was over fresh and going a great pace. It was an advantage as he went away in his next stride without "dwelling" for an instant.

(The subjoined extract from an article which appeared in *Baily's Magazine* for May, 1876, records the tragical death of "Cognac"):—

"Those who have hunted with the Surrey Staghounds, the Queen's, and Baron Rothschild's, as well as with the Hon. Henry Petre's Staghounds, must remember Mr. Vickerman's hard riding, and now that he retires into Wales, to his country seat, he will carry with him the good wishes of all whose pulses quicken at the sound of the cheerful horn.

"Mr. Vickerman was an unexceptionably good judge of horses. He had three very fine horses, 'Carlow,' 'Cognac' and 'Champagne'; and when he sold 'Cognac,' which was a queer tempered horse, he predicted that he would either break his own neck or his rider's. Mr. Souter, who rode 'Cognac' at Hendon Steeplechases, told me of the truth of the prophecy. Mr. Souter was leading with Jem Mason, and Mason's horse fell and broke his thigh. 'Cognac,' missing his companion, became like a lump of lead, and would not rise at the next fence, but rushed right through it *and broke his neck*."

Mr. Vickerman writes in such a clear and lucid style that not for a moment could I entertain his suggestion to cut down

the above notes, which accompanied the portrait of himself, his favourite hunters and trusty servant. On the contrary, I seize the opportunity to avail myself of his permission to extract from his unique and most interesting hunting diary, lent to me at the request of his nephew, the late Mr. John V. Longbourne, some of the most notable runs through which these gallant horses carried their owner; also to relate a few of the adventures which have befallen him in his long hunting career, and which, if given in full, as most of my readers will concur with me in hoping they may be at no distant date, will make a volume of striking interest; not only to Essex sportsmen, but to all lovers of the horn and its associations, where'er they live or roam, for his diary, commencing in the year 1844-1845, and running on to 1887-1888, deals with fifty-nine packs of hounds in twenty-three different counties.

Mr. Vickerman was living at The Priory, Blackmore, when he rode "Carlow" for the first time on November 6th, 1844, and though delighted with his speed and fencing, he could not hold him in the light double bridle he was trying, and five or six times had the reins fairly pulled out of his hand—congratulated by some and envied by others for possessing him. In a very straight gallop from Dunmow High Woods on Saturday, November 16th, "Carlow" seems to have gone to his owner's satisfaction, jumping a gate out of a farm yard into a road beautifully and clearing one wide place where the Huntsman (Jim Morgan) and John Burge (?) trying to follow him, fell side by side.

Mr. Vickerman was much amused to hear that Mr. Adams, the late owner, who was vexed at parting with him, had reported that "I was sick of the horse and wanted to sell him, and also that John Bramston looked at him with a jealous eye." He writes: "Ingersole mounted a cap for first time, the first person who followed my example."* Mr. Campbell, from India, with eye glass, rode well, but required a team at last to extricate him from a deep ditch. Ten days later Morgan, the Huntsman, told me that the old Squire† called at his house last evening and observing "how well the little man in the cap went on the brown horse on Saturday, enquired whether the little man was likely to sell the horse. Morgan replied "not the slightest chance of it." I confirmed Morgan's opinion, and gave him a quotation from Shakespeare, "There is a tide,"

* Mr. Vickerman always rode in a cap and set the fashion in Essex.—Ed.
† The Master, Mr. John Conyers.—Ed.

&c., alluding to the opportunity Conyers had of purchasing "Carlow," the neglect, or rather rejection, of which, had been the cause of his becoming my property.

Saturday, November 23rd. After being much pulled down during the week by violent cold and dosing and other remedies for it, and still suffering from it to an extent to deprive me of my usual spirits in the anticipation of a day's sport, and the day being cloudy and cold, but still with the wind at N.E., I proceeded *solus* to the meet at Hatfield Heath, hacking the little chestnut, "Chancellor," who was quite in a fidget at sight of assembled horses and red coats. Mounting "Carlow" we proceeded to draw several springs and small woods in the neighbourhood to allow the Squire, who had friends staying with him, to join us. Met the Rev. Charles Tyrrell, whom I had seen in the train on Tuesday morning, on his way to Oxford, to purchase a horse, and found that he had acted on my recommendation and gone to Tom Smart, of Cricklade, and bought one from him. The Squire coming up we trotted away to Row Wood, which looked like business. "Carlow" made a mistake going thither by coming down at a foolish little place into a road and depositing his rider on his back. He behaved, however, very well afterwards, standing still without attempting to hurt me, so that I was glad of the fall as it settled satisfactorily a doubt I entertained about him. Knowing his vicious propensities in the stable, Mr. Wm. Whitfield * could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw me down, but laughed heartily at the mode in which both animals acquitted themselves.

Drew Row Wood without a symptom of a fox, and afterwards a small wood adjoining with like result and with blank faces were proceeding to Waters Gorse when the Squire and Jim Morgan threw the hounds into another part of the small wood (Waters Grove) and a minute afterwards our ears were greeted with Will Orvis' (the first whip) view halloa. Galloped round the wood and viewed a fine dog fox going at a slashing pace across a large field to Row Wood. The hounds were laid on his track immediately and the gallant fellow disdaining all shelter from covert passed through Row Wood, thence to Man Wood at a splitting pace, disdaining the protection of which, he made to Brick Kilns, and thence to Norwood, and thence by a track certainly not known to me across Forest Hall to Ongar Park Woods. The distance, which those who knew the country best (Collins and others) estimated at twenty miles as the fox

* A splendid horseman.

ran, was accomplished in one hour and forty minutes. In the large woods of Ongar Park he hung for nearly an hour and many of the field having had quite enough of it and thinking all was over, left; but he broke again and ran to a small wood called Dewley Wood, by the side of which he fell a prey to the hounds, just three hours from the time of finding him; but they were too weary to eat him with much avidity until after a few minutes' rest. The fox was found to be unusually large, with a good deal of white about him, and is said to be the gallant fellow who gave us five good runs last season, from Row Wood, generally, to Screens.

The fencing and pace were very severe, the former particularly difficult towards the close, when with tired horses we got into a stiffer country and had some very awkward roads and park fences to surmount. Among the men who went well were Soames, Stallibrass, Burge, Whitfield, Wilson, Stanes and Bodes, but as it was stated (*e.g.*, Bodes) that no horse went so well as "Carlow," I took the brush and Goddard Morgan, second whip, reminded me of a promise of last season to give him a silver cup made into a fox's head—to which I agreed, though the finish did not come within the condition of my promise, which was "to kill in the open." My cold made me full weak to hold "Carlow," who made another mistake during the day by getting into a ditch going out of a road. I regretted the death of the gallant fox, but recollected my expressed wish of last season, "that if ever he died a violent death it might be an honourable one and that I might get his brush."

Monday, November 25, 1844. Met at Fyfield. Numerous enquiries about "Carlow" and remarks upon his going so well on Saturday. Jim Morgan told me that the Squire had been again asking about my selling him and was most angry with him because he had sold him to me. Burge also told me that the squire had commissioned him to get me to name a price. To both I replied that I did not want money and that as the horse suited me I would not sell him

Saturday, November 30. Met at Thornwood Common and on my way there heard that the Squire had been libellous respecting me on Thursday, having exclaimed when he came up to the earth where the fox had run to ground :—

"If the little man in the cap had been out the hounds would have been driven over this and we should have known nothing about it."

I venture, however, to demur strongly to such remarks, since I believe that I cannot fairly be charged with over-riding, "always riding wide of hounds."

On Monday, December 2, met at High Laver Church. Drew Matching Park, Prior's Wood, Brick Kilns, Row Wood, and Lancaster Springs, all blank. Our Row Wood fox's death was much regretted when his covert was drawn blank. Rode "Carlow" whom I had reserved* for to-day thinking the meet a good one, but the day decidedly the worst of the season hitherto. J. Burge remarked how handy I had made "Carlow" with reference to the quiet and clever way in which he had taken his fences during the day while drawing and going from covert to covert. I had some fun at a gate with a drop on the off-side. The Huntsman and Kidd had gone over with the hounds. I was behind and by the time I walked up thirty or forty horses were congested at the gate, they or their riders, and many of them good ones too, *e.g.*, Bramstone Stanes, not liking its complexion. Having asked them whether they intended to take it or clear the way, and Graham exclaiming "Let's see 'Carlow' do it," the latter alternative was chosen, and I put "Carlow" at the gate. To my surprise, he refused. Ingersole (in his cap and on a weedy grey brute whose knees had been broken before and reopened this morning by being too reverentially disposed on the other side of a fence into a road) then essayed with good pluck, but fortunately for him, his steed followed "Carlow's" example. "Carlow" was then put at it again, and again declined it, and Ingersole and his weed followed suit. A voice then exclaimed that "it was the *caps* which the horses could not carry over the gate," upon which indignity to my favourite head-gear, I borrowed Ingersole's whip and charged "Carlow" at the gate, giving him a smart stroke on the shoulder and he flew over beautifully.

"How to Live to Eighty."

Monday, December 9. The frost still continuing and the wind from the N.E. keener, if possible than ever, I took my shower bath standing upon ice and went to town in disgust.

Monday, December 30. Met at Thornwood Common and redeemed my promise to Jack by borrowing Mr. Broughton's pony and taking him with me and leaving him in charge of Thomas, with whose assistance and the steady pony he managed very much better than I anticipated, displaying the right stuff for an embryo fox-hunter and enjoying the sport thoroughly. "Carlow" was in capital case and went excellently, so that one (Littler) remarked that it was worth £200 to see him trot, and another (Reeves) observed that I had my "riding breeches on."

* How often have I reserved a good horse for a favourite meet with similar results.—Ed.

(After a long day with the Queen's Staghounds on Friday, April 11th, 1845, described most graphically and at length in the diary, the following postscript is extracted: "Reached Osborne's stables at 4 o'clock, without a dry thread about me but rejoicing in having had a good day's sport, and having got back in time to show myself at the office and transact a little business before the day closed; after this I recruited my inner man by a dinner at my chambers consisting of a couple of mutton chops with tea close upon the heels of it, and then set to work and continued at it until past midnight. I record this fact not as an unusual occurrence, but as a very ordinary one, and with an honest pride of making the most of a day ostensibly devoted to pleasure."

"Sleeping at Dunmow on April 22nd, after being present at a Hunt dinner held at the Saracen's Head, Dunmow, the former night, with Mr. Wilson, of Canfield Hart, in the chair, supported by the two Woodbridges, Mr. Vickerman drove the next morning, in company with Kidd, to the King William, when a scratch pack of draft hounds, kept by Adams for Morgan, were to hunt a stag; the animal having broken its leg their chances of a day's sport were reduced to a bagman, which arrived (*sic*). 'With the ten couple of hounds brought by young Sam Morgan, our pack numbered seven and a-half couples, with about fourteen or sixteen riders.'")

Our fox, a vixen, having been turned down on a mead near the King William, whisked her brush and went away in style, but owing to the dry state of the ground, we lost her about 2 o'clock.* We then returned to the King William, where nearly all our party having recruited themselves with meat and drink, Adams' man, Buttle, was despatched with a lot of meat attached to a rope, with a supply of aniseed, to take the line of meadows from Lord's Wood, towards Bush Wood and Chelmsford; while we were giving him law a man arrived warm and pale, who had just run another drag from Hallingbury for some Bishops Stortford men. The greater part of our company were not for running a drag, and I confess, with my back and hip still very painful from Tuesday's misadventure, the tremendously hard state of the ground, enough to lame your horse, and break his knees and his rider's neck, and being mounted on "Chancellor," not noted for keeping on his feet, I was of the majority; but Kidd, who had just purchased, and was riding for the first time, Bridge's brown horse, appear-

* A good thing too.—Ed.

ing to greatly wish for it, the rest consented. With my sore limbs my confidence was not increased by hearing most of the men declare that they would not ride "Chancellor" across country if I would give him to them for so doing, and others confessed that they could not ride him.

Our party then went a little way to see the Bishops Stortford men come in, but having made up my mind to ride I reminded them that we had much better not let our drag go stale. We started accordingly in a mead close to Lord's Wood, and could smell the aniseed before the hounds owned it, which they did soon afterwards, and away we went very prettily over a beautiful line of meadow, along the course of a brook with stiffish fencing and wideish places. Unfortunately our team did not much relish aniseed, so that they did not long continue to run well, but the line of country chosen by our dragsman was so beautiful, being nearly all grass and so different from the hard fallows which most of us anticipated, that we all enjoyed our ride and ran up to our leader at the brook very near Bush Wood. Adams, our Master *pro tem.*, blew his horn well and rode better than he sometimes does. Kidd went better on his new purchase than I have ever yet seen him go. His horse is a long blood-like looking animal, 16 hands high, and with his good hands will get out of the habit of refusing his fences. It is singular with him that he generally rides a new horse better than he does one to which he is accustomed. We must have had between one to two hours with our drag, and I left them at nearly half-past five going to draw Bush Wood, not caring to be one to disturb any of Conyers' coverts, and having to call at the Farm to discuss the felling of some trees.

Saturday, November 29th, 1845. Met at Matching Green. Weather mild, cloudy and muggy, and the field numerous, including several strangers, and among them Lawton and a friend named Griffiths, a Frenchman and companion of the Duchesse de Berri in her adventures in La Vendée. Man Wood was drawn blank to our surprise, but we found in Brick Kilns and went away prettily to Envilles; changing we came back again to Wood End at a great pace, when we killed a vixen cub, and there was then a talk of going to a bagman at Leaden Roothing, but Hodgson fortunately suggested that we should try Norwood, where we found a brace, and went away with a fine old fox through Brick Kilns and Wood End to Man Wood. Here it is supposed we changed and went on to Hatfield Town and Mr. Lowndes' Park, where we gave it up.

Up to Man Wood the pace was very good, and altogether it was by far my best day's sport this season. Morgan's horse was beaten with the first fox, so that I saw nothing of him until we came to Man Wood. The ground rode rather heavily, the day was close and warm, and very trying to horses.

As usual on a good day there were many misadventures. Octavius Coope had two falls, his horse rolling over him on the last occasion. Lawton was well mounted on a nice looking

Octavius E. Coope

mare, and Griffiths, who rode a horse of Cassidy's, enjoyed the sport amazingly, and went very well. "Carlow" was very tired, more so than I have ever known him to be; he carries more flesh than he will do later in the season, and does not spare himself. To-day he went excellently, but showed he was tired by making a mistake at a high bank just before coming to Hatfield, when we were both some time in the balance, but eventually recovered ourselves.

(The portrait of a man better known to the past than the

present generation. Mr. Coope had always a pleasant word and greeting for everyone, and was one of the most cheerful men I ever came across in the hunting field. He was a liberal supporter of the Essex Hounds, whose fortunes he followed for more than forty years.—ED.)

On Saturday, January 3rd, 1846, at a Dunmow meet Adams was as usual loud in his regrets at having parted with "Carlow," and with a Mr. Wood (who at one time possessed him) was as loud in his admiration. Morgan, the Huntsman, on hearing them turned round in his saddle and exclaimed, "Two wise men, you! to have a good horse and not know it."

Saturday, January 24th. A perfect spring-like day, the fixture Bigood's House, Mr. Edward Woodbridge's, two miles beyond Dunmow. The field rather small for a Saturday, but included two strangers who looked like going, the Hon. the Rev. Edward Grimston (brother of Lord Verulam, a noted cricketer) and Captain Alexander of the 2nd Life Guards. We drew Bigood's. A brace a-foot, one breaking just by old Conyers, who holloaed and blew until he brought the hounds and Morgan. Before they came, however, he indulged in a tirade against myself, most unfairly and unjustly, as to over-riding; no doubt from the report of Morgan* on Saturday, who has been more liberally treated at my hands than at those of nearly all the other members of the Hunt, and generally at a check begins bellowing out instead of thinking what has caused the check and acting accordingly, and consequently frequently makes the most absurd casts possible.

Conyers followed up this attack by a request that I would increase my subscription, choosing a very fitting opportunity for making such an appeal. (Here follows a long description of the run in which Captain Alexander, mounted on a fine bay horse, distinguished himself, and Grimston rode like a thoroughbred sportsman, always near the hounds and in his place and going well and quietly, while (*sic*) "Viscount Maynard went very well to-day and generally goes well for an elderly man. He certainly rides better this season than he did last.") Conyers' Hunt is very much indebted to his lordship, for his coverts are some of our best and the country around excellent. It is a pity that he does not dress a little differently, for his dark trousers, with long antigropelos† always loose and unbuttoned at the thigh, look very seedy and are rendered still more unsightly by being surmounted by a red coat.

* Riders beware, the Master may not see you, the Huntsman does, he generally tells him, and we have heard of many a lost fox being put down to certain parties.—ED.

† What are antigropelos?—ED.

After losing our fox, we drew on to a covert belonging to the Puckeridge Hounds, called "The Jock," and thence to Quendon Woods, &c., &c. We returned home by way of Henham, Elsenham, Takely Gate, Canfield and the King William, making quite 25 miles from the place where we left the hounds; making a long day for horses and men. "Carlow" trotted home in his usual gallant and untiring style, and must have gone between 80 to 100 miles by the time he reached his stable soon after 9 o'clock.

(A little later, in his attempt to have a day or two with the Heythrop, Mr. Vickerman laments his failure in the following strain) :—

"Falls."

My ill luck has certainly pursued me so far this season in every particular. To select the first week's frost for the period of sending horses and men 150 miles from home is quite in keeping with the rest of my fortune during the season, and to hurt myself at every fall is of the same calendar, and very different to my first season in Essex, 1843-44, when little "Chancellor's" pluck and indiscretion, added to my own eagerness used to give me so many falls, from which I escaped so well that they used to joke me by saying that I ought to take out a patent for my discovery of the art of falling without hurting oneself. Before then, in the riding school at Paris when putting "Un Cheval Méchant" at the bar, who had probably never gone over a broomstick before, I recollect the Frenchman remarking that I knew how to tumble.

Soames, Peters, Roberts, Hobson, Wood, and Littler were among the party who assembled at the Sun and Whalebone on Saturday, March 29th, to meet Sam Adams's pack of staghounds. After running through Brick Kilns and Man Wood, they entered on the best part of the run, going as hard as they could go, only four with the hounds, Hobson, myself and two farmers. In the course of this part of the run one of the latter was a few yards in advance of me and we came to an ugly fence, uninviting in itself, but rendered worse by a *root ditch* placed on the near side of the fence in such a position as to give the chances in favour of your going neatly into the yawner on the off-side. Observing the young farmer to hesitate and waver on the selection of his spot, I shouted to him energetically "For Heaven's sake, sir, ride straight;" but unheeding my caution he crossed before me, went askew at the fence, his horse making a mistake at the root ditch and both lay sprawling on the other side. I was never so frightened before, at the

pace I was going and at such a fence to check my horse was to get him into the root ditch and precipitate both of us on to the prostrate man and horse; to stop him was impossible. "Champagne" never pleased me so much; he jumped the fence beautifully, lighted short of the man and jumped clean over him, and gave me the satisfaction of picking up his horse and assuring me that I had not touched him.

Saturday, April 18th. "Another last day," very unexpectedly, for I went by the train last night fully bent upon going to town this morning, but on alighting at Brentwood met Lescher, and found that Conyers was to meet at Laindon Hills to-day. I told him that I had neither horse to ride nor clothes to wear, "Carlow" being in physic, "Champagne" * having already done two days this week, and my hunting wardrobe in town; † but he replied that he was sure I should manage it and he was right. I decided therefore to hunt "Chancellor," and sent Beckington an hour early to Brentwood with despatches for town, and hacked "Rocket" on to Brentwood, taking "Chancellor" thence to the fixture. There I met several old faces and steady stickers to Conyers, including the inseparable triumvirate of Colvin, Lescher and Field, who all welcomed me back and seemed glad to see me. The country looked particularly uninviting, heavy land with great high and wide fences, blind and straggling, about the worst altogether that I had seen in my rambles this season, and the very worst to bring a hot, impatient little animal like "Chancellor" to. We found a vixen in Laindon Hill ‡ coverts, ran her round the covert and in it for some time, and killed, the men of course declaring it to be a dog. We then drew several coverts below the hill, including that where they found the fox a fortnight ago, which gave them such a good run, but all blank. Went back towards the hills with better success, found a fox by the drag and ran him over a very cramped, heavy country nearly to Hutton, where the hounds were stopped as they were about to enter Lord Petre's coverts.

The men in this neighbourhood talk of giving Conyers £200 a year to hunt their country a day a week, but I have some doubt whether they will carry out the arrangement, Conyers has too much country already to require more.

Wednesday, May 6th. Sent up "Carlow" and "Chancellor" by Beckington to have the portrait of the three taken by Messrs. Barraud, of Pont Street, Grosvenor Square.

* "Champagne," another of Mr. Vickerman's good horses.—Ed.

† Mr. Vickerman had been hunting with the Baron's and other packs.—Ed.

‡ It is interesting to hear that Laindon Hills was one of Mr. Conyers' meets.—Ed.

Thursday to Saturday, 7th to 9th May Mr. Barraud at work on the horses and groom. He is much struck with "Carlow," and declares that "take him for all in all" he is decidedly the finest horse he has ever painted. This is something to be said by an artist who has painted Prince Albert's hunters, many of the crack hunts, with some of the finest horses in the kingdom. "Lawn meet at Ascot," "Badminton Lawn meet," &c.

(The following entry in Mr. Vickerman's diary may be taken as a specimen of its descriptive interest):

Monday, May 11th. To-day deserves to be recorded as a pleasant holiday though not a "hunting day," albeit it savours of it. It was fixed upon for the performance of an engagement made with Colvin in the early part of the season that William * and myself should ride over to Monkhams and see the Shorthorns on the first frosty day that stopped hunting. The unusually mild weather caused the engagement to be deferred until to-day, which in place of being frosty is one of the finest, clearest, and hottest days we may expect this summer. Before starting I tried Wilson's chestnut horse, "Cognac" (which Beckington fetched yesterday after his previous and unsuccessful attempts) by riding him over the bar a few times, and then mounting Beckington on "Carlow" and Davis Williams' groom on "Grimaldi," went out into the meadows to try a few fences which, blind with leaves and long grass, looked more treacherous than inviting to those who knew their real width and depth.

We went down Partridge Hills across the farm into the further Partridge Hills and finding the chestnut disposed to go I charged him at the brook. He tried to stop himself before coming to it, and in so doing slid along from six to eight feet; but even with this disadvantage cleared the brook, here rather wide, but the landing was lower than the take off, which gave him an advantage. Desiring the grooms to remain where they were, I put him quickly over the fence into the mead opposite Wm. Caton's and then charged him back again at the brook at a place where the banks on both sides were perpendicular. This time he seemed to know what he was going to do and without a pause took it in, his stride covering upwards of four feet on each side, and clearing, as Beckington afterwards ascertained by measurement, twenty-four feet. The three horses then walked through the brook at another place and

* William Longbourne, half-brother to Mr. V.—Ed.

over two or three fences into the Twenty Acres (except the grey, who having nearly got into all his fences, we would not allow to attempt the awkward fence into this field) where I had intended to try the pace of the chestnut against "Carlow," but he pulled so that I preferred galloping him round the field by himself, which he performed in gallant style.

On entering this field we met William and Stephenson, who had proceeded thither to witness the performance, but who thus lost the brook jumping. The trial had already quite decided me in favour of the horse, *my only doubt being my ability to hold him*, and we were quitting the fields with Beckington about to open the gate into the oat field, when calling to him to stand still I rode at the gate. The chestnut cleared it with his fore legs but hit it very heavily with his hind shins, which with the drop on the other side shook horse and rider a little, and had I thought broken the gate; but on turning round I found the gate entire, he having struck it at the very thickest part. This mistake was not entirely his fault, for he had his eye on the other horse, "Carlow," standing near the gate and to prevent his swerving towards the lower fence on either side, I had to ride him at it so quick as scarcely to give him time to rise. Fortunately he did not hurt himself, and showed his pluck by being quite ready for the next had I been disposed to indulge him. He crossed back over the fence he had come over between the jumps at the brook in a very clever style. On returning home I saw "Rocket" jump the bar for the first time, and was delighted with his clever and pretty performance; after leading him over it Davis rode him over it, but though a light weight and good seat, he got his hands rather high for a youngster and was not far from being capsized. I then rode him over once or twice, and from the spring and elasticity of his hind quarters, did not feel surprised at his trying the powers of adhesion of a rider.

William and I then started on the cob and "Chancellor" for Monkhams, the residence of Mr. Colvin, and on two such first rate hacks, and on so fine a day, enjoyed our ride of eighteen or twenty miles through a beautiful country, very greatly; reached Colvin's at 2 o'clock (later than we had intended), where we found our host and Colonel Jones with a substantial luncheon awaiting our arrival. Discussing our lunch and getting the flies out of our eyes, we first looked over the stables, kennels, &c., which were as extensive and complete as a man need desire; the horses, both hunters and hacks, of the best and his half dozen couple of harriers the

pick of his late pack, and it is to be hoped the seeds of a fresh one. His farm and Shorthorns next occupied our attention and particularly William's, after which the beautiful prospect all round the house delighted us until dinner time, to which we had consented, contrary to our usual rule, to stop, but there was no resisting the *bonhomie* of our host, who really deserves the unusually excellent character he bears.

After a dinner with which no fault could be found, except that it was almost too good, considering that we had to ride twenty miles upon it, our host not only consented to our leaving when we liked (half-past nine) but ordering a beautiful little chestnut hack for himself, accompanied us as far as Copped Hall, to show us a road by which we saved a mile. It was a lovely night, a full moon, and deliciously cool after the heat of the day, and we reached the Priory at half-past eleven, well pleased with the rare event of an holiday and excursion together.

(Mr. Vickerman purchased "Cognac" after this trial, giving him that name from his pale colour and fiery nature resembling that ardent spirit. I shall now proceed to extract from Mr. Vickerman's voluminous diary, a few of the notable runs through which this remarkable horse carried him, until I come to the day when Mr. Vickerman wanting to sell him got a very bad fall, putting his shoulder out and otherwise hurting himself. Having at the end of the season (1845-46) made arrangements to go down to Melton the following season to have a fling in the grass countries, his hunting journal for the season 1846-47, commenced as follows) :—

Monday, November 2nd, 1846. Behold me then at Melton, comfortably quartered at the Harboro' Hotel, kept by Mr. Wm. Mason, with five horses yclept "Carlow," "Champagne," "Cognac," "Circe," and "Chancellor," in the stables, under the care of Beckington and Tom, with the aid of a helper for this occasion, and as a climax I must add Frank's little white terrier "Snap," who astonished me when most unexpectedly I found him here yesterday, having come quietly with the horses, for whom he has a particular friendship. Little "Snap" more forcibly reminded me of home, when I first saw him yesterday, than all the others together. I suppose from never before having seen him away from home and not expecting to find him here. I had been amusing myself by wondering what the poor little dog would think of the absence of the horses and their attendants, and the loss of his daily run with them to Brentwood.

The horses travelled up by the road to London on Thursday and were quartered for the night at Shackles, for the purpose of being near to Wilkinson and Kidd, the saddlers, whose aid was required in a few repairs to saddles, &c., and on Friday morning came down by the half-past ten train to "Syston," and thence by road, reaching here at 5 o'clock the same evening, &c., &c.

(Mr. Vickerman's hunting wardrobe having gone astray he writes: "I must make my *début* here this season in a shooting jacket." He then goes on to describe his horses.) They look in excellent condition and I feel just the reverse, causing Beckington, who is a kind-hearted fellow, to express his fears that I may not be strong enough to steer them over the "tremendously big places," as he styles them, abounding in this country, especially "Cognac" whom I have not yet tackled with hounds. To add to my personal disadvantages on Friday morning while cutting the loaf I cut the top of my forefinger of my left hand to the bone and into the nail, so that I have yet to try whether I shall be deprived of the use of my bridle hand. Some little time after the accident and while standing by the fireplace alongside my brother Frank, who had just tied some lint round the finger, I suddenly fainted, dropping as if I had been shot, falling over the standard of the fender and should have gone with my head into the fire but for Frank's promptness, who clutched me by the coat and landed me on my back on the hearthrug. So much for my condition.

Our meet this morning was Kirby Gate. Here I found the Quorn assembled for the first day of the season and the scene was certainly beautiful and exciting, though I had scarcely health and spirits to enter into it. We drew Cream Gorse, tall and thick, where several foxes were at home, and after a ringing run of an hour by Thorpe Trussels and Ashby Pasture, got back to the gorse.

(Sport does not appear to have been very grand, but "Carlow" seems to have gone very well, exciting general notice and admiration, particularly of a rough-rider of Billesdon, Tomlin, who was in raptures with his make, shape and style every time he came alongside him). By riding right-handed I fortunately got through the day without hurting the same finger, &c. I own that I was rather disappointed with the country to-day, it was more hilly, the fields were smaller, and the fences more cramped than I had anticipated. There were, of course, fine horses, good riders, and men of gentleman-like appearance. Mr. Greene, of Rolleston, the Master, is a light

weight and a good sportsman. All the servants are light weights. Lord Strathmore, a steeplechase rider, rode to-day in a style that *might* do for steeplechasing but would not do long in a good run. I was not much struck with the appearance of the Quorn Hounds, they were not nearly so well-bred in appearance as I had anticipated, and were, moreover, rather uneven.

Tuesday, November 3rd. Another nice fine day, after a discharge of the "Pride of the Morning" in the shape of a light soft rain, of short duration. The pack to-day was the Cottesmore, Sir R. Sutton's, and the fixture, Burley-on-the-Hills, the seat of Mr. Finch, M.P. for Rutland, and twelve miles from hence. Sending on "Champagne," I hacked "Cognac," but the latter is almost in too high condition for a horse of his temperament; his temper was ruffled by being led up and down while I was at breakfast, causing me to finish it abruptly for fear of an accident to him, and he was like a mad horse frequently, while going to covert. This decided me rather to alter the plans I had formed of joining the Pytchley at North Kilworth to-morrow by railway, and instead of doing so to meet the Belvoir at Aswarby Park, sending "Cognac" on the same morning to cool him down a little before encountering him with hounds. Burley is a magnificent place, and one of the completest I have ever seen. The house, a plain and very substantial Grecian edifice, stands on the brink of a commanding eminence, and must afford lovely scenery down the glades of the park and woods and over the tree tops of the surrounding country. The rides through the woods reminded me of Cirencester Woods on a small scale, but the place as a whole, though less extensive, seemed to me more complete.

After hanging about the woods for some time they ran fast and straight for a quarter of an hour to another covert, from which he went away across an open country, partly plough light land, small as well as big fences and several stone walls, running to ground in a drain at Normanton, the seat of Sir Gilbert Heathcote. The running, while it lasted, was very good, the hounds hunted remarkably well, the country generally was a very pleasant one to ride over, with flying fences and some stiff ones, and the day altogether pleased me more than yesterday.

I was delighted with "Champagne," who, if I had doubted it before, proved himself a splendid hunter, lively yet temperate, jumping equally well stiff timber, walls, stake-bound fences and bullfinches; going the best pace with ease to himself, frequently leading, always with the hounds and with the first three

or four horsemen, consisting of Ben and John Morgan and an effeminate-looking and speaking man in pink, with light sandy imperial, and taking a stiffish wall out of a road at which the field had pulled up.

Piloted by a young farmer to Burley, from there I followed Mr. Oliver, Lord Wm. Thynne and Mr. Bateson, over a beautiful line of meadows to Whissendine, and thence by road to Melton, fifteen miles from the finish. Sir Rd. Sutton's pack numbers some excellently bred and well-shaped hounds, and his Huntsman, Ben Morgan, and his brother John for one of the whips, and another brother, young Tom, for second horseman (sons of Jim Morgan, Conyers' Huntsman), made me almost feel as if I were in my own country. Old Goosey, whom Ben succeeded, came up on a pony as they were debating about dislodging the fox, but it being three o'clock I left them without assisting at the tedious operation of digging. My bad condition tells on me, for I felt rather tired on reaching Melton at 5.45, though still I think I shall pick up all right, and in fact am picking up strength as I go. To-morrow will be a trying day, upwards of 50 miles of road work on a pulling horse.

Aswarby Park

CHAPTER XII.

Aswarby Park—The Belvoir, 1846—William Goodall—Tom Moody—For the honour of Essex—A Lincolnshire dyke—Lost in High Leicestershire—Big v. *Little Horses—Singeing* v. *Clipping—Sir Richard Sutton—The Punch Bowl—Burrow Hill—An awkward fence—Colonel Wynham—The Pytchley at Crick, 1846—George Payne—Lady Villiers gets the brush—Lord Strathmore wins the Worcestershire Steeplechase on "The Switcher"—The Old Club—"Carlow's" cleverness—Dick Sutton—Captain Coles—A brilliant scurry—Good Champagne—Billesdon Coplow—Mr. Frere's House—Mr. Surtees—Mr. Gascoigne—Lord Gardner—Leicestershire men's dislike of ditches—"Cognac" takes a stiff line of stiles—Lord Forrester—Ranksborough Gorse—Mr. Parry—Captain Houblon—Hallingbury Hall—Simpson's discrimination—"Cognac's" leap.*

WEDNESDAY, November 4th. This morning found me in the saddle at 7.45, on the back of "Miss Circe," having hastily swallowed a cup of coffee and put a little dry toast in my pocket to last me until I should reach Grantham, whither Beckington had preceded me on "Cognac," with instructions to order breakfast for me. The morning was misty and cloudy and the first part of the road very uninteresting until I reached Croxton Park, a seat of the Duke of Rutland, where the country assumed a magnificently English appearance, with undulating green slopes well clad with fine timber; and this character of scenery continued nearly to Grantham. Some of the villages nestling among the trees and meadows are very pretty, especially I may mention Harlaxton.

'Circe" fortunately started very quietly and did the distance to Grantham, sixteen miles, in capital style in one and a-half hours. I found Beckington waiting at a turning, which led to the stable of the "George," with the consoling intelligence that I had still twelve miles before me to Aswarby Park, the fixture of the Belvoir to-day, the seat of Sir Thomas Whichcote. I had accordingly only time to take two or three mouthfuls of breakfast, and then mounted "Cognac," who, being a capital hack, brought me to the fixture (by way of Londonthorpe, Welby, Culverthorpe and Swarby) just as the hounds were leaving the Hall to draw the first covert.

"Cognac" fretted much at starting, and with the close morning and unusually thick coat, had sweated a good deal and had not recovered from his excitement of yesterday. I hacked him, therefore, very quietly, and rode him, as I intended to hunt him, in his own bit and the nose strap, but using only the snaffle rein, having the other rein tied in a knot and lying on his neck ready to be made use of when required.

The Belvoir are a beautiful pack, well-bred and regular. William Goodall, the Huntsman, is a relation of the noted Tom Moody, and is a fine good-natured looking man, knowing his business and a good workman. I was not so much struck with his whips. The field was small, I suppose, from being rather a remote meet and the early part of the season. The first covert we drew was of about forty acres in extent and soon gave tokens of holding the animal, who broke on my side, but returning to the covert they could do nothing with him.

The country around here was very rough and uninviting, smallish fields, and a good deal of heavy plough and blind wide fences, very unlike some of the country I had passed through on my way from Grantham, which, though principally plough land seemed firm, with large fields and neat compact fences. We then proceeded towards Quarrington and found in the first covert we drew there and went away at a rattling pace, threading through another small covert without stopping. It was as well I did not think of riding "Cognac" in a snaffle only, as had been suggested to me, for had I done so I must on the first start have gone over a flock of sheep, and unless floored by them must have capsized the Huntsman and a Mr. Thomas somebody in the ride of the covert; but with the aid of the gridiron bit I was able to hold him, though he fought violently against it. If I had felt any doubt before, this would have convinced me of the propriety of taking a line of my own, and accordingly as soon as we were quit of

the covert, which we had to leave by taking some rails which he jumped capitally, I set sail in a parallel line to the right of the hounds, the Huntsman and other forward riders having taken their left side. Never was I carried in finer style. "Cognac," who I had fancied felt a little tired on the road just before reaching Aswarby Park after having travelled twenty-eight miles by himself, seemed as fresh as if he had just quitted the stable, swept over the larger fields as though he covered them in a dozen strides, lying down to his work in a style that made his rider feel as if mounted on a low horse, and took his fences in his stride with judgment and clearness. The bit answered admirably. I believe without it that when he had once set sail he would have gone on in a straight line until stopped either by want of wind or by some fence which he had miscalculated; but with the aid of the bit when requisite I was able to give him all the advantages of the snaffle alone in his galloping and jumping, while at the same time I could check him at a cramp or impracticable place, or at a gate opening into a road, or when hounds were at fault, or in short, whenever it was requisite and could thus guide and direct him with the snaffle. He seems to have no notion of turning with hounds like old "Carlow."

Our run lasted about three-quarters of an hour, and we lost our fox rather unaccountably. "Cognac" led by far the greater part of the run, and in the course of it set the whole field twice, and many of the field (in fact all who were in his line) at several other places. The first place looked on coming at it like an ordinary hedge with a widish ditch on the other side, but when taking it it proved to be a Lincolnshire dyke, very wide in itself, but with the earth dug away at this particular place, materially increasing the width. While in the air I thought he must drop short, but he cleared it gallantly, and turning round I shouted to one of the whips who was following me that it was a bad place, but found that he did not need the hint, for neither he nor any one else attempted it. The second place occurred when hounds were running slowly and in the latter part of the run, I could observe that the Huntsman and all the field turned away from the line of the hounds into a road; but supposing this was to avoid a wide place I was not sorry to be left alone with a pulling horse. I soon perceived the cause of their taking to the road, from a bank of earth rather recently thrown up; but this same bank prevented me from seeing exactly what I was coming to or its width, but seeing Goodall and those of the field who were parallel with

me in the road turn in their saddles to observe what I should do, I concluded it was a wide place, and therefore selecting a portion of the bank which seemed sounder than the rest, I put "Cognac" smartly at it "for the honour of Essex," and he cleared the whole superbly, alighting right on the top of the bank of earth on its opposite side causing Goodall to exclaim "Well done!" It proved to be a regular Lincolnshire dyke, with the width and difficulty much increased by having been recently cleared out and the earth thrown up on both sides. It certainly was a place to startle weak nerves, for I could see when crossing it that the sides were perpendicular and about ten or twelve feet deep, so that there would have been little chance of getting out in the event of a mistake.

"Cognac" pleased me much in his timber jumping; he cleared beautifully a very stiff flight of rails in the early part of the run; just after having taken my own line and kept it for some time, I observed the hounds ahead of the rest of the field and joined them by taking these rails, shaking off all who had followed me to that point. We afterwards drew the woods and plantations round Keythorpe Hall, a fine old mansion in an antiquated style, but could not get our fox away, who finally went to ground in a corner of the covert.

Thursday, November 5th. I got up this morning rather tired from my exertions of yesterday, but lightsome and in good spirits, for to-day we were to meet in a capital country, Stanton Wyville, in High Leicestershire, sixteen miles from Melton as I was told; but I see by my map that it is nineteen, and I am sure I must have made twenty-four or twenty-five of it by following the directions of the elder Mason, who meant well but did not certainly tell me the shortest way. It was well that I had the gallant little "Chancellor" under me as a hack (albeit fretting at my red coat), he cantered in excellent style through Burton, Little Dalby, Pickwell, Somerby, Ouston, Loddington, East Norton, Keythorpe, and thence to Stanton Wyville; all this was wrong as I afterwards learned, since I ought to have gone by Burrow to Tilton, Skeffington and Rolleston, and by Rolleston Spinney right across to Stanton Wyville. With the exception of going so much further than was necessary, I managed pretty well with such a hack as "Chancellor," notwithstanding the faintness of the morning, until I came to East Norton, and then in endeavouring to follow a direction given to me by a woman, I got completely bewildered in the great grass grounds of High Leicestershire, rising in undulating swells in all directions around me with

few trees and sprinkled over with cattle and sheep, but not a living soul within ken.

At length I spied a building which looked somewhat but not much better than one of the ordinary cattle sheds in this part of the country and placed in the centre of immense grass ground, and making for it I found it to be a human habitation, or herdsman's hut, tenanted by a woman who directed me to Keythorpe. Here I met a girl, a woman and a man, each and all of whom directed me to Stanton, and assured me that I could not miss the road; I thought at the time I should be clever if I did not miss it, and the more so as my directors were in the valley and could not therefore point out the objects they were describing — moreover the morning was still rather misty. However, I cantered up the hill and did my best to follow my instructions, but got as completely lost as if in the desert of Sahara, and in a locality which seemed about equally populous.

Here I was fuming and fretting, galloping about among the large grass lands, trying one bridle way after another with alike indifferent success. Looking at my watch and finding that it was half an hour after the time fixed for the meet, losing leather and patience in bumping over the ridges after my long ride of yesterday, and I have no doubt making little "Chancellor" think that his master was bewitched. At length my eyes were gladdened by the sight of a human being looking like a spectre half a mile off. I galloped to him and from him got a direction to the opposite hill above Stanton, there I met some foot people who told me that the hounds had not found and were then drawing near the mill on the summit of the opposite hill, near Gloostone. To the mill therefore I turned, "Chancellor" taking a couple of stiles and an awkward fence very cleverly, and then I found Beckington with "Circe," who had been wondering what caused my non-appearance, but having had like myself some, though not nearly so much, difficulty in finding his way.

The vexation I felt in losing my way and being behind time, not expecting to see hounds all day, added to my not feeling very well since I came, quite upset me for the day and I felt out of spirits. The mare, too, with her cough upon her, was out of sorts and has not in fact been right since her return from Radstock. This was the worst day's sport since my arrival, and to make matters worse, "Circe," whom I rode with hounds for the first time, did not please me. In the first place she was too small and felt like nothing under me after

the other three horses. Even Beckington, who has always seemed to wonder at my liking large horses for cross country work, is coming round to my opinion and admits now that he sees other countries and the horses in them, that a small horse in such a country as Leicestershire, with its enormous fences, is quite out of place.

My opinion is and always has been, that the size of a horse should be as much regulated by a man's style of riding as by the number of stones he may happen to weigh. To a man in the habit of cutting and popping about and making for gaps and easy places and gateways, even in an easy country, a small quiet horse is as good or better than a big one, because he is more pleasant to ride, more active and will generally last longer if not overweighted. But to a man who is fond, when he can manage it, of keeping the line of the hounds, or a parallel with it, and taking his fences pretty much as he comes to them, a big horse is of great advantage in any country, but indispensable in a country like Leicestershire. A big horse will cover as much ground in two or three strides as a little horse can accomplish in three or four, and the latter must jump at a fence which the former would take in his stride; while at a very high or wide place, the difference in size tells still more palpably. Of course in making the comparison, I assume each horse to be equally well bred and similar in every respect, except their difference in inches—a slow horse, however big and powerful he may be, is of little use anywhere and quite useless in a fast country.

"Circe" cannot of course be answerable for her height any more than her rider for his, but she displeased me by making one or two mistakes (from which, however, she recovered herself well), and in refusing some of her fences. This, however, is no doubt in a great degree attributable to both mare and rider being out of sorts, and neither having much confidence in the other, and, therefore I have determined not to prejudge her, but to reserve my opinion on all but her size until after another trial. She is very fast even though out of sorts, and would, I think, in condition be very lasting; she had no difficulty in keeping alongside a beautiful brown mare of Lord Gardner's when we were going at about the quickest.

I returned with the hounds by way of Rolleston, Mr. Greene's place, and a very pretty one it is, of moderately comfortable size, and delightfully placed, in the middle of those fine grass grounds generally well timbered, in the neighbourhood of gentlemen's seats. There is many a spot in

this neighbourhood where I should like to pitch my tent. The country looks so English, the very hills, though detrimental to hunting, give it a variety of scene, and the continued grass and numerous bridle ways render it delightful for riding or rambling. I can scarcely imagine a more enjoyable life than to have one's headquarters in this neighbourhood with occasional rambles in spring, summer or autumn, to the Highlands or Wales, or similar places, for some fishing and shooting, not omitting the salmon or red deer.

But after all this eulogium shall I say I am disappointed with Leicestershire as a hunting country, or rather that it does not come up to my expectations, or the opinions I had formed of it from the hasty view and taste of it I had in the latter part of the season of 1844. I confess that such is rather my feeling at the present moment, though perhaps I am somewhat premature; but it is more hilly than I expected, and the fences, though few and far between, are in too many places impracticable, so that it is impossible to ride as straight as over the Roothings, and offers a premium to those who affect gateways and bridleways, which are found in abundance. At any rate, I think that I am not premature in saying that I am disappointed with the greater part of the country round Melton, so much so as to feel some surprise that it should ever have attained such great fame and popularity; but it must have proceeded rather from its central position in regard to the three packs of the Quorn, Belvoir and Cottesmore, than to the goodness of the country, for all its best country lies in High Leicestershire, which is a greater distance from Melton than from either Leicester, Lutterworth or Market Harborough. Billesdon seems to me very central for the best country of the Quorn and Cottesmore, but would be very far from the Belvoir though within reach of the Pytchley, when in the Market Harborough country.

Tomlin, the rough-rider, who like most men of his class, seems a good natured devil-may-care fellow, knowing everybody and every place, was very civil in pointing out the road I ought to have taken to-day, in case of my coming to the same place again, lives at Billesdon, I will therefore enquire further as to its merits.

Having dismissed my hack I had the unpleasant task of riding home a tired horse, but was fortunate in getting the pilotage of Mr. Oliver's servants to Melton, which I reached about 6 o'clock, very tired and out of spirits. The long and bad day made me feel all the fatigues of yesterday, and being

unwell and out of spirits in the bargain, I perceived that unless I sacrificed to-morrow and laid up, I should probably knock up and then have to make a greater sacrifice. I was the more inclined to take this prudential step, from the fixture to-morrow being at Widmerpool, which is reputed to be a very bad country, woodland, heavy and clayey, plough land, small fields and blind fences, but like all other bad countries sometimes showing capital sport.

Friday, November 6th, 1846. A lovely clear day would have made me regret my prudence, had the state of my health and strength made the expediency of the measure more doubtful. As it is, with a day's rest and care, to-day an easy distance (three miles), to-morrow, followed by the rest of Sunday, will, I hope, set me up, and render any further sacrifices of a similar nature unnecessary. I amused myself to-day by looking at the horses in the stable, ordering "Cognac" to be clipped, a process I cannot bear, but necessary in the present state of his coat; on taking a stroll across the fields towards Kirby, accompanied by Snap; in partaking of an early and invalid dinner, followed by a copious supply of tea (which would have made Frank exclaim against the horrors of excess in tea drinking); in writing letters home, and getting up an arrear of these notes which may, I hope, call to my recollection years hence the present times and scenes, when I shall no doubt regard with a very different eye and feeling to those with which I now behold them.

Before another season I must endeavour to recollect to have the singeing lamp used once a fortnight as soon as the coat begins to start. This will bring them out, when the season arrives, fine and short-coated and without any appearance of the coat having been tampered with. I am indebted to William Mason for this hint, who, though sticking to his business and always in the house, takes a great interest in horses and hunting (not that this is to be wondered at), imparts his experience very freely and good-naturedly, and in addition to making one feel that his house is about the most comfortable and more like home than almost any hotel I have ever stayed in—amusing me while waiting at table with gossip and anecdotes of bygones, as well as present men and things. The horses also seem to be as comfortable as the master, to have everything they require and to be doing well, so that all these are considerable sets off against the disadvantage of being some distance from the best of the country.

Saturday, November 7th. I got up this morning feeling

lighter and in better spirits from my lying up yesterday and in coming down stairs was surprised to find Francis Pym, just arrived by the train from Leicester, where he had stopped last night, being on his way up from Scotland, having heard from his brother Alan of my being here and having travelled up with Sir Richard Sutton, who had entered into an animated conversation on foxhunting, which had inspired him with a desire to have at least a taste of it. He had therefore determined to have a day at Melton and afterwards visit his friend Potchin of Barkby Hall; while partaking of an excellent breakfast provided by Mason, to which Pym's excitement would not permit him to do equal justice with myself, we arranged for the hiring of a horse for him from Cuttage, while I went on with "Carlow" to the meet at Little Dalby Hall, the seat of Mr. Hartopp, very prettily placed on rising ground amidst trees and near the church, with a very neat lodge approach, presented an interesting spectacle.

A large field generally, superbly mounted and looking like going, and Sir Richard Sutton and his whole establishment exceeding in neatness of appearance and style and the quality of their cattle anything I have ever seen. Sir Richard himself pleased me amazingly; he is a middle-aged man, about the middle height, of small regular features, dressed in a scarlet frock coat, cap, and cords, taking the management of his own hounds, which he does well and with spirit, and looking like a gentleman and sportsman. His two sons are slim and spare, dressed like sportsmen, mounted superbly, and going very well. The Huntsman, whips and some of the second horsemen were all mounted equally well, all dressed in new coats, cords and caps and with new whips, and stirrup leathers over the shoulders, looked the beau ideal of a first-rate establishment. The hounds are of a stamp and breeding suited to this excellent turn out.

We immediately proceeded to draw the small plantations and coverts of Mr. Hartopp, Sir Richard handling his hounds with great spirit and energy, and soon found, in a small covert called the Punch Bowl, the exciting "tally-ho! gone away!" being heard from the top of the covert. Sly Reynard had faced the hill and took a round at best pace by Thorpe Burrow Hill, Somerby, Pickwell, and back again to a singular dry stick covert adjoining the Punch Bowl where, after hanging a short time, he was killed. During this ringing run, which lasted for about three-quarters of an hour, including a longish check at the finish, owing to another fox having got up and the hounds

dividing, the pace was tremendous and the country very severe, as well from the continued succession of steep hills as from the formidable nature of the fences. Not above a dozen rode to hounds, including Sir Richard Sutton, his sons, Potchin, Freke, and Tomlin, and myself on "Carlow."

Among the awkward places I may mention the top of Burrow Hill, where we had to descend a declivity almost perpendicular, over a low stone wall and jump a fence at the bottom. Very few ventured down this place, "Carlow" went down like a cat and jumped the fence at the bottom well. Another awkward place was out of a turnip field into an adjoining field which lay higher and the fence was first a ditch, then a hedge set up on the higher ground with a rail just beyond, very dark coloured, so as to be scarcely visible. "Carlow" went at it so beautifully that I could hardly help looking more at him than at the fence. His eye was on the rail and setting his ears forward and arching his neck he went at it in magnificent style and cleared the whole without touching a twig. Nearly all the leading horses took the same fence in various parts, awkward as it was, without a fall, though some rattled the timber about not a little. Leicestershire is certainly the country for fine horses and bold riders, nor is it to be wondered at the horses becoming clever, for in addition to the stiff fencing the ground, though grass, is so broken up by ridge and furrow, and grips, hollows and mole hills, as to require a very clever horse to go full swing across it without a mistake; but this "Carlow" did to-day to perfection.

No sooner had the hounds eaten their fox than another was tallied and seen going straight up the opposite hill. The hounds took up the scent and swept up the hill as mute as mice, horses following without much respite from their previous exertions and with every appearance of another clipper; when upon the fox working round again from its native plantations Sir Richard very properly decided not to destroy another this morning, and had the hounds whipped off. We then trotted off to Ouston Woods, soon found, and had another run not equal to the first; finished by a great deal of galloping around this large covert, to which we had, I believe, come back again. After this the select few who stayed went away to Tilton Woods and adjoining coverts, where we found again, all the field being left behind except Ben Morgan, the Huntsman, mounted on his second horse, a magnificent grey—so being nearly 4 o'clock, gave it up.

Pym had previously left with his friend Potchin: the latter

on his favourite horse "The Miller," had gone well; the former was unlucky with his hired horse, which proved a screw and a roarer, so he exchanged for a powerful chestnut belonging to Watson, who keeps the "George" at Melton. I left off near Skeffington, where one of the young Suttons lives in a neat house built for him by his father, in a sweet situation and in the midst of a beautiful country; thence I found my way to Tilton, where I put "Carlow" into a stable and gave him some chilled water, and he brought me home in a style as if he had not been a mile. On my way through a succession of gates, and quite unusual with him, he quickened his pace on coming up to them as if he wished to jump them. I suppose the upright fencing reminds him of old times, before he went into Essex, and suits his taste. This was one of his pulling days, but he was very much admired and enquired after. Col. Wyndham, who lives at Melton, recollects him when running in Ireland, and from his and others' statements he must be now nearly twenty years old. What an astonishing horse he is! and what must he have been at six years old, and how could Lord Howth ever have parted with him?

A hound was ridden over to-day by a "stranger in a cap," and as I answered this description, and had ridden in a foremost place, I fancied, as did Pym, both from Sir Richard's observation and also from having received a friendly hint from Jack Morgan as to Sir Richard's love and care for his hounds, that Sir Richard thought that I had been the perpetrator of the mischief. I therefore accosted him at Tilton Wood, asking him whether he thought so, adding that I had not touched a hound, at least that I was as conscious of having eaten one as of having ridden over one to-day, and that had I inadvertently done so I would have tendered the fullest apology; when he replied in a very gentlemanlike style that he did not attribute it to me, that he did not know who it was, but that the hound was a stallion, a particular favourite, that he believed he was only hurt, not killed, but that whether or not he must say with Osbaldeston, "I have plenty more at home."

Wednesday, November 11. None of the three packs hunting to-day, I betook myself, with "Carlow," by railway to Rugby, to meet the Pytchley at Crick, one of their best fixtures and in some of their best country. There had been a sharp white frost in the night, and the morning was bright and beautiful, but not looking much like hunting. I had to be stirring early to go by the 6.40 train from Melton, and therefore took merely a cup of coffee, put some dry toast in my pocket and started by

the train, which took me to Rugby by 9 o'clock. I led old "Carlow" up to the "Eagle" at Rugby, about a mile from the station, where I had an indifferent breakfast in company of three officers of a regiment quartered at Birmingham, who had come by rail this morning to join the meet, and having ordered some linseed gruel for "Carlow" and dinner for myself to be ready on our return, trotted off to Crick, about six miles from Rugby.

A numerous and well-mounted field were assembled at Crick, including two ladies on horseback and Lady Villiers in her phaeton. The hounds looked strong, well bred and business-like, but scarcely as finely bred as the Belvoir or Cottesmore, and not so large or handsome as Conyers'. Mr. George Payne, the deservedly popular Master, is apparently about 55, of a large mould and well built, and looking like a man who understood his business. He was mounted on a remarkably compact, short-legged, bay horse, who seemed quite perfect at his business of crossing a country. Mr. George Payne waited very good-naturedly half an hour for Lord Strathmore, who was coming down by rail from London after his recent exploit of winning the Worcestershire Steeplechase on his noted horse "The Switcher," beating most of the best horses and riders, professional and otherwise, of the day.

We then proceeded slowly towards Crick Gorse or covert, and his lordship just then making his appearance, the hounds were thrown in. Before any challenge was given, in fact without his being found, a fox was viewed away, the hounds were laid on and went away across the road in the direction, I believe, of West Haddon, at a tremendous pace. The very first fence out of the road was rather a stiff stake and bound, and made a very considerable thinning. Hounds ran over a beautiful country, principally grass-grounds smaller than those of Leicestershire, but with fences stiff enough to please hard riders, but still generally practicable. The worst fences were the doubles and ox-fences, of which there were abundance and manifold partings were the result, the sure sign of a good quick thing. We went on in this style, about the usual number of a dozen being well up with the hounds, with only one slight check until we came to Lord Henley's place at Watford, delightfully placed near the church and commanding a fine view, where, after a scurry or two round the lawn we killed our fox, the brush being given to Lady Villiers, who was there in her phaeton.

This is by far the best run of thirty-five minutes which I have had this season, although a ring, Lord Strathmore said that he was innocent, like myself, of its having been a ring until

told so. I was told yesterday by Mr. Richard Oliver of the "Old Club," that I should find lots of doubles, and I can testify to his being a correct informant.

("Carlow" appears to have gone excellently in spite of putting Mr. Vickerman down once, and giving him a nasty rap on his poor proboscis (making the third day in succession in which it had been in the wars having smelt the bullfinches on the two previous days), displaying all his usual quickness and cleverness over the ridge and furrow, and popping in and out of doubles and taking walls and stone stile in excellent form.) The "Diary" continues:

(One awkward fence he did so superbly, that I must record it. It was at the top of a grass field which sloped upwards and had a kind of wide stile or rails not particularly high, but placed on the far side of a very wide dry ditch, or rather hollow, or a ditch with the sides worn much away, I was there about fifth or sixth from saving "Carlow" up the hill, and could see those before me incline towards this stile, which was quite in the line of the hounds, but not liking the look of it turn quite out of the line and take a fence at right angles to it. I relied on the old horse's cleverness when he sees his work, and just put him at it without disturbing his stride, and he cleared it brilliantly, kicking his hind quarters sideways on landing, in a most clever style, to get them quite clear of the obstacle, but rather difficult for his rider to sit. As he turned sideways I could see that a man encouraged by my success was coming at it, but he made a terrible mistake, his horse going right into the dry ditch and falling right on the rails, breaking them and giving his rider a regular purler.

Just as the fox was killed, I was told that "Carlow" was either staked or over-reached. I found it was the latter, and game as he is, it made him go lame. This was excessively unlucky, as the next covert to be drawn was Vanderplanks, a certain find, and one I had heard much of and greatly wished to see. I was walking afoot leading him, to see if the lameness would go off, when Lord Strathmore (who seems very fond of horses and seems to take good care of them, though he makes them go straight) passed me, and agreeing with me that he was too lame to proceed, I turned round and walked afoot to Rugby, eight miles. My expenses to-day were £2 12s. 6d. but it is certainly the best day I have yet had.

(One Monday out of Mr. Vickerman's "Diary" *re* his Leicestershire experience this season, as written by him, is a fair sample of his diary throughout, and I must, with the space at my disposal, condense the remaining notes which I extract.)

Tuesday, November 12th.—Our fixture with the Quorn this morning, was Houghton-on-the-Hill; "Little Chancellor," fidgety as ever since the commencement of the season, carried me there in his clever style, and I accompanied Mr. McGildowney, who knowing something of the road took me by a very pleasant line from Twyford by way of Quenby and Ingarsby, and passing by a very fine old mansion called Quenby or Queeniborough Hall, formerly occupied by Sir Walter Carew, but at present tenantless, I could not but be surprised that so fine an old place in a pretty situation of Leicestershire, and so admirably placed in the centre of the best country, should be without a tenant considering the many men of fortune who resort to Leicestershire for the season.

The morning was cloudy and cold with the wind in the east, the country very dry, and the glass high and with but little promise of rain. I felt rather stiff and tired from my exertions of yesterday in riding and walking, and rather shaken from my fall and rap of the mouth. Glen Gorse produced us a fox who gave us a fair hunting run of between an hour and an hour and a-half, circling round by King's Norton or Norton by Galby, where we lost him. We then drew a small covert or gorse on the way to Billesdon just by Galby. Here a fox broke in the direction of Rolleston; returning to the covert he broke in the opposite direction with the hounds close at his heels, and went away over a very stiff line of country and at a racing pace, crossing some very big and awkward fences. Of the whole field though several got away with them, only four could live with the hounds down to Neston Brook, where we came to a slight check, viz., Dick Sutton, Captain Coles, Mr. Shepherd and "Champagne,"* five or six couples of hounds, who did not get well away with the rest of the pack, were unable to join them until the check at the brook. We lost a little time at the brook in crossing through it at an awkward place, and here we dropped Shepherd, who took some other direction and let in Lord Gardner and other fast riders, who knowing the country had made a cut to join us. Coles led through the brook followed by Sutton, who had some difficulty getting his horse through, but had led up to that point in such workmanlike style that I thought it only fair to wait until he had the first chance of getting through; and he continued at a racing pace for about five minutes longer, over a stiff but fine line of country, crossing

* Mr. Vickerman's horse.

several ox fences until we ran to ground in a drain, after as brilliant a scurry of ten or twelve minutes, as I ever rode in. Dick Sutton was mounted on a fine-looking thoroughbred horse which he rode on Saturday, but had only recently purchased of Payne the dealer, and went in a style that could not be excelled, getting a fall at the very last ox-fence, but escaping scatheless. Captain Coles (of a regiment quartered at Loughboro') rode as he seems always to do with indomitable pluck.

"Champagne" pleased me immensely. I had never yet put his powers so fully to the test, but he answered the call I made upon him gallantly. Though the pace was racing, and over ridge and furrow, to which he is not accustomed, it was not at all too quick for him; but, on the contrary, he seemed to enjoy it and pulled more than ordinarily, taking his fences at full swing without a mistake, clearing the ox-fences magnificently. One of the most awkward fences was one of the latter description, from one grass land into another, sloping down to it with a drop on the other side and a very bad approach, and the rail dark coloured and scarcely discernible. This he led over taking it in his stride, but rather swerving towards Shepherd who was riding parallel with me, for which I expressed my regret. Altogether I was delighted, as well with his good speed and cleverness as with his jumping, and can only conclude by saying that no horse could have performed better in so quick a thing than he did. I must certainly think again before parting with so fine a hunter. When I heard Dick Sutton declare that he would not take £300 for his horse while admitting that he was inferior in breed and appearance to "Champagne," I could not help feeling that long as the price was I gave for the latter, I had not given more than his value, indifferent as a hack though he be.

I felt anything but well or in good spirits this morning, and it was no small comfort to find myself on him instead of either of my other pulling horses. He has gone very much better since I have had the large easy bit, which I procured after he had given me the fall with the Duke of Beaufort's Hounds last season, which deprived me of the use of my bridle hand for so long a time; and the improved mode of shoeing him has still further added to the comfort and mode of his going. It seems singular that I should have felt, and still somewhat feel, less confidence in "Champagne" than I need have done, but I suppose it has proceeded from riding him alternately with a

so super-eminently clever a horse as "Carlow," from his being a bad hack, and careless in going, even across country, so as to need a good deal of watching and holding, from having given me two bad falls in the first season of my hunting him, both of which hurt and incapacitated me for a time, and from his being occasionally so lame without any apparent cause. At present though getting a little light from his work, he is, and has been ever since he has been down here, more lively, sound and safe on the road than I ever recollect him to have been, and carries by far the best coat of all my horses.

We then proceeded towards the "Historical Covert" of Billesdon Coplow, a gorse covert on the top of a hill with the summit surmounted by high trees. A very compact, pretty and modern house is built just on the south side of the Coplow, belonging to and occupied by Mr. Frere, who seems to take great delight in planting and improving his pretty little demesne. Mr. Frere came out and invited the field generally to partake of some luncheon, but being a stranger I did not consider myself included in the invitation, and had passed the door when Lord Strathmore, on coming out of the house with Mr. Frere, saw me, called me by name, and introduced me to Mr. Frere. Dismounting, I went into a very nice compact dining room commanding a fine view, and took a glass of sherry and piece of cake, which on this cold day, and from having omitted to put into my pocket the usual supply of dry toast, came very acceptably. I was much pleased with this little mark of courtesy and affability on the part of Lord Strathmore. I precipitately left the house on a servant announcing that they had found, and we soon got away with a fox which no doubt went to ground after running two or three fields, but Day, the Huntsman, was too knowing to point out the whereabouts to the foot people.

We then returned again to the Coplow, found again (probably the fox which had crossed before me just as they got away with the first), and had a very pretty run of about half an-hour, giving it up near Tilton ; only a small field stayed to participate in this last run, which was over a very pretty line, but some very stiff and frequent timber jumping, generally with bad approaches, but all of which "Champagne" jumped excellently without a mistake. Mr. Surtees, a regular Meltonian, and who has a very level neat stud of ten or twelve hunters, went well at the beginning of the run, leading in a line which involved a good deal of timber work, in answer to my enquiry as I rode back with him to Melton, whether he

did not find six days a week rather a toil and labour throughout the season, replied that so far from it, he only wished the season lasted for twelve months in place of six, adding that he only omitted three days during the whole of the last long season, and found himself on the very last day with only one horse and that a hack and lame, all the rest having been screwed up. There are some then I find who like hunting better than I do, for if I had the power I do not think I should hunt more than three or four days a week, unless staying at a place like Melton, where to exist you must hunt, for there is nothing else to be done.

(Here follows a page of personal impressions which Mr. Vickerman says "I should not record except in a private journal like the present, intended merely for my own inspection and amusement, and to recall to my recollection years hence, if I live so long, the scenes and circumstances of the passing hour connected with a favourite pastime.") He then goes on :—A singular character with these hounds is a Mr. Gascoigne, living at Somerby. He is a square-built man of between fifty and sixty, and about 16 stone, riding peaceful and very quiet horses which, nevertheless, he is always apostrophising for being unruly, in good round oaths, which he seems to make particularly sound and sonorous, as if to give effect to them. To-day his face was caught by a bramble called "a lawyer" and scored like a gridiron, bleeding a good deal, and when the blood had dried, his appearance while swearing at his horse, when chesting a rail, which he had ridden at, a sight I shall not readily forget.

Friday, November 14th. The Quorn at Six Hills, &c. Lord Gardner rode to-day with his accustomed indifference when there is nothing particular worth riding for. He seems susceptible of cold, for after any galloping he buttons up his coat, carefully elevating the collar closely round his neck. The fear which these Leicestershire men have of encountering a little blind ditch, while they will unhesitatingly charge an enormously stiff bullfinch or a flight of rails, seems singular to me coming from a land of ditches, and it was most amusing to see them pull up at a little hedge with dry grass, not venturing to take it because they could not see the ditch (for which they were earnestly looking) for the best of all reasons because there was none. So much is this a habit, that these hard-riding Leicestershire men fear these little places more than the bigger ones to which they are more accustomed, and as I hear

generally get more falls in a day in this country than during a season in their stiffer country.

In consequence of Captain Bateson's horses coming to the Harborough, Lord Archibald St. Maur not sending as many as he at first intended, my horses are shifted into much more comfortable quarters, &c.

It is rather a disappointment that so few of the regular Meltonians are here yet. The continued dry weather no doubt intimates that they may safely stay away without much fear of losing any good sport. Lord Wilton, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Leslie, and other old stagers have not yet arrived. Mr. Crawfurd is too ill to come, but is recovering from his dangerous attack. A man of his wealth, coupled with his amiability and liberality, would be missed in any country he had been in the habit of frequenting. Lord Forrester has not yet come to Belvoir, and until he arrives to take the mastership of that pack, I hear there will be no meets within reach of Melton. This is unlucky again, for the Belvoir is the pack which the Meltonians rely upon for Mondays and Wednesdays throughout the season.

Monday, November 16th. Lord Forrester having come down to take the mastership of the Belvoir, we had a meet at Croxton Park. In a run from Clawson Thorns just after crossing the Nottingham Road, Mr. Vickerman's horse "Cognac," distinguished himself by taking a stiff line of stiles. The first was a poser, strong and stiff, with a wide, dry ditch before it, and frightened away the whip and the field. Goodall by this time had got a field to my right, I put "Cognac" at the stile steadily and determinedly, and he cleared it very cleverly, got into the line of the hounds, going most delightfully and luxuriously bang by himself with the hounds alone and taking all the other stiles and fences beautifully. At a footbridge over a place wider than usual he put his foot on the bridge and hopped over to the other side and then cleared the low stile on the farther side with another jump. In this manner I got on to Broughton Hills and up to a stone house recently erected by a Mr. Johnstone, on the very top of the hill called Little Belvoir, and commanding an extensive prospect, it is said, as far as Lincoln Minster, &c., &c. On describing the line to Mr. Mason, he told me that he recollected it perfectly, and that a certain gentleman, naming him, had had three or four falls in taking the self-same line of stiles a season or two ago.

(Unforeseen business engagements cropping up, Mr. Vicker-

man's projected stay at Melton was cut short, but he came in for a great day with the Cottesmore from Langham on Wednesday, November 18th.) We proceeded to the far-famed covert called Ranksborough Gorse. The last time I was here, February, 1844, the Gorse was six or eight feet high; to-day it was only a foot high, and so short, sharp and impervious, that the hounds seemed afraid to face it, &c. The diary winds up:—As one's last day it was satisfactory to hear the Huntsman and most of the hard riders declare that it was the best day they had this season, that it was a day worth a whole season, and that they feared it would be long before they had another run equally good over such a country.

December 21st. A Fyfield meet suddenly altered to Blackmore. This is one of Conyers' besetting sins and caused general dissatisfaction and incovenience and a day's "row." Many who had come from a distance, like the "Myers," found that they had gone five or six miles further than was necessary only to return, and Thos. Hodgson did not get his horse at all. After a debate as to the comparative merits of the High Woods and other places, we drew Horsley Park, Moor Hall, Skreens, Barnish Witneys, and lastly some little coverts near to Grinsted Wood, and finished with a "blank day." Vexatious enough, after ten days frost and with two such horses out as "Cognac" and "Champagne," and both so fit to go. "Conyers'" Hunt certainly gets slower and more slow, the men worse mounted than ever, the hounds less spirited even than usual and the field thinner. Conyers complains that he neither has foxes nor subscriptions, that of the latter only two have been paid this season, and made an earnest appeal to me for mine, which it seems has not appeared in his banker's book, though paid in October.

Morgan declares he shall be ruined with the few foxes killed and the small caps when a death occurs, &c. Conyers has now quarrelled with Colvin, his largest subscriber and a very good-natured fellow, and to-morrow he makes a bye-day to draw his covert of Galley Hills, expressly, he declared, to kill his "pheasants and hares."

(In a good run with the Puckeridge, Mr. Parry's, on February 22nd, 1847, "Cognac" distinguished himself over a very big fence, necessitating putting on the steam, and a sharp pull up on the other side as hounds checked, eliciting the remark from Simpson, the Huntsman, "Look at that gentleman! that's the way to pull up. I wish every one would do so." This discrimination of Simpson's brought him half

a sovereign.) Returning home this day Mr. Houblon was hospitable and courteous enough to ask me to accompany C. Tyrrell to luncheon at Hallingbury Hall,* which I accordingly did, and rode thither with them and his brother, Capt. Houblon. The house is very large and roomy, capable of sleeping fifty guests easily, and the dwelling rooms lofty and spacious; but the exterior of the house, which is of red brick, is very unarchitectural and inelegant, with four-corner square towers, like the Priory, but each surmounted with a sort of pagoda roof. The park is, however, fine and spacious and standing by Takeley Forest, which belongs to it, renders the whole place, to my taste, one of the most complete and gentleman-like in the county.

(From diary, Saturday, March 13th.) Old Webb, of Hatfield, was out to-day with his *protégé*, young Sullens. Both had examined the spot where "Cognac" had cleared the brook last Saturday, and stated that there was seventeen feet of water, and that the horse must have cleared twenty-six feet, and this, too, uphill, the place of alighting being higher than that of taking off. He's certainly an extraordinary horse.

* For photograph of Hallingbury Place (not Hall), see page 32.—Ed.

John Vickerman Longbourne

CHAPTER XIII.

The General Fast Day, 1847—John Vickerman Longbourne—Jack learns a lesson—The Finchley Stag Hounds—Jim Bean—Mr. Garland—Old Meshech—Hobson's spurt—A twenty mile point—An eighty mile ride—The Aftermath—Baron Rothschild's Stag Hounds—"Cognac" bolts—A Disaster—The Quorn at Six Hills—The dislike of Meltonians for mud—The Chartist Demonstration—Special Constables—Mr. V. is sworn in—An unlucky season—The Opening Meet, 1848, at Row Wood—Mr. Vickerman parts with "Cognac"—A week of Disasters—Mr. Petre's Harriers—The Blackmore Beagles—West Essex Yeomanry—Coventry Steeplechases—"Cognac" falls—The Victim wins—Riding for the Brush—Abraham Caton's Beagles—The Puckeridge, 1850—Eastwick Wood—The Four Men in Pink—The test of a good run—The Epping Hunt, Easter Monday, 1850—Up! Up! Up!—The Take in the Open—Bridle roads—"Carlow" draws Mr. V. to Church on his Wedding Day—Season 1850-51—A bye day with Conyers—The great Drought—Mr. Conyers advertises his meets for the first time—Lord Petre—Boyton Hall—The Christys—Essex as a Hunting Country—The choice of six packs within fifteen miles of Blackmore—The kind "Lucy Long"—An Old Park fox—The Miller's maid—Barking Creek—The End of the Season—Boys at play.

MR. VICKERMAN'S nephew, J. V. Longbourne, whose portrait, as I knew him, is given on this page, comes in for notice in his uncle's diary (*sic*):—Saturday, March 27th, Jack returned from Eton on Tuesday for his Easter holidays and I accompanied him and his father with Bridges Harvey to Grays, in the afternoon and spent the following day, Wednesday, with the family, being a "General Fast Day" in consequence of the distress arising from the scanty harvest and failure of the potato crops. The church at Grays has just been thoroughly repaired and re-arranged, in fact, renewed, and is now (with the exception of the steeple, which I cannot digest) as pretty a little church as need be desired.

(We must go forward a great many years to realise that the boy Jack has developed into the grown man who is driving the grey mare, and whose features are familiar to all those who were following the E.H. at the time this photograph was taken, when he was living in winter quarters at Wynters Grange. Alas! at the time he sent me this photograph, July, '96, he was not able, through serious illness, to hunt a mouse, let alone a fox. A kinder-hearted fellow or better sportsman never breathed. All had a good word for Jack Longbourne; his name appears a good many times in the extracts I have made from his uncle's diary; sufficient, therefore, for me to add that in his love of the game and bold riding he was a worthy follower of that bold Nimrod, Charles Ranken Vickerman, and although he had his share of tumbles, he always came up smiling.)

This morning we started for the fixture at Hatfield Heath, Jack on his "The Queen," I on "Carlow," &c. A small field and a blank day memorable to Mr. Vickermann from Mr. Conyers, after they had finished the forest about 2 p.m., asking them in to luncheon at Mr. Houblon's; C. Tyrrell, Wilson of Canfield, James Meyer, Warter, Coope and Conyers doing justice to Mr. Houblon's hospitality. After luncheon they drew Bassenden Springs and other coverts, where they were joined by Mr. Houblon and Mr. Jolliffe Tufnell, with a lad, probably a son of the latter, and Sir Henry Meux. They were on their way to pay a visit to Mr. Rush, at Elsenham, and waited some little time on the chance of our finding, &c., &c.

"The Queen" is one of the best shaped, cleanest and quickest ponies I have ever seen. She jumps beautifully, and at one place a drop made such a spring through a standing jump as to astonish Jack, making him change colour and wonder when she was coming down, and causing his legs to fly away from the saddle when he landed. Fortunately, seeing the drop, I had admonished him to sit well back, so he did not lose his seat. He is a plucky boy, fond of the sport, and only wants practice* to make a good and bold rider. He is naturally in love with his pony, but she is far too fat and rough to make me think much of Parris as a groom, and nails are driven into the very point of her toes to fasten the fore shoes. (Jack was not so lucky in his essay at hunting—but let the diary tell the tale.)

Tuesday, March 30, 1847. On returning home from town

* This practice he evidently got, for in the years I knew him in Essex he was always a dashing horseman and one of the best-hearted fellows and keenest fox-hunters I ever came across.—Ed.

last evening, drenched to the skin by a snow shower which greeted me on alighting from the train at Brentwood, without any great coat, and beat in my face until I reached Park Wood, and which "Trap," from his snorting and starting seemed to relish as little as his rider, I was puzzled by Beckington repeating that he had been to the "King William" and Leaden Roothing according to my instructions, and that no one there had heard of its being in contemplation to uncart a stag on the morrow, but that he had met an individual named Snow who stated confidently that Hastingwood Common was to be the fixture. As these places are a good ten miles apart, I was puzzled as to the best course to pursue, but finally determined to start at nine o'clock in the morning and ride round to Stallibrass's house, which I believe to be in the neighbourhood of the latter place, and who would be safe to know which was to be the fixture.

The morning broke bright and beautiful after a slight frost during the night, with the ground in capital order from the rain and snow of Sunday and Monday, but a further difficulty arose from Jack's non-appearance from Doddinghurst, where he had spent the afternoon and evening of yesterday, and whence he was to have returned by ten o'clock last evening. Knowing the distances the horses would have to go in case the "King William" should prove to be the fixture, and having been kept up in expectation of Jack's return until long after midnight, it was sorely against the grain that I gave him the chance of upwards of half-an-hour (bearing in mind also his vehement protestations that he would not stop even to dinner and leave me alone, which I had checked at the time) giving him the option of staying until 10 o'clock; but it being then past the half hour after nine, and having first to go round to Mr. Stallibrass's, Ongar Park Hall, I started on "Cognac," with Beckington on "Champagne," but instead of taking the short cut to Stondon across the fields, kept along the road on the chance of meeting Jack.

We had scarcely cleared the village before we did so, in Mr. Harvey's cart, and shouting to him to mount his pony, which was in readiness, and come after us immediately, we proceeded at a foot pace until we came to the turning at Stondon without seeing anything of Jack, and fearing he would miss the turning we returned in the road and met Mr. Harvey's cart proceeding homewards, and learned from Stone that Jack had passed him in the village riding quickly. It was, therefore, quite evident that he had taken the wrong road, and as he would naturally have ridden at a great pace in the expectation

of overtaking us, and he had now lost nearly an hour altogether, it was manifestly useless to ride after him, and we therefore continued on towards Ongar Park Hall, leaving Jack to take his chance of dropping in with us or picking up information on the road which, added to what he had heard yesterday when with Beckington at the "King William" might enable him to reach the fixture. I may here add at once that he rode, by his own estimate, about thirty miles about the country, and returned to Blackmore about two o'clock without having met us or gone to the "King William" and learned thus a lesson about keeping engagements which I could not regret. It was no doubt a severe disappointment, and will, I trust, do him more good than a dozen lectures. I therefore continued with Beckington to Ongar Park Hall, going by Stondon, Chipping Ongar and Greensted, and on reaching it found that Stallibrass had gone to Mr. Cure's, but fortunately before following him discovered that he had been directed to the house of the father instead of the son, and that the latter John Stallibrass lived at Hastingwood Common four miles off.

"Misfortunes never come singly," I thought, as I rode towards the latter place and reflected on the loss of time and extra distance which we had covered, and when we reached John Stallibrass's house and found that the "King William" was after all the fixture, that it was a quarter past eleven, that Stallibrass had been gone more than an hour, and that it was a long ten miles, I almost gave up the hope of ever seeing hounds. And while reflecting on the beauty of the morning, the capital state of the ground for riding and scent, and the magnificent country in which the stag was to be uncarted, I blessed my ill-luck and felt not over amiably disposed towards Jack, who had been the cause of the loss of an all-important hour in the morning, but nevertheless rode briskly on to Leaden Roothing by way of High Laver, Matching Green and White Roothing, trusting to the time generally consumed in guzzling and gutting when a deer is to be uncarted to a scratch pack.

At White Roothing, to my infinite relief, we met Mr. Garland, Jim Bean (the steeplechase rider) and other worthies connected with the Finchley Stag Hounds, and learned that the deer cart and hounds were behind and that one o'clock was the hour. Thus, after a series of ill-luck we reached the fixture in time, but with the penalty for the poor horses of having gone nearly 25 miles on the road at a brisk pace instead of an easy eight miles over the fields. The vexation made me quite nervous, for having to jump a stiffish fence between Chipping

Ongar and Greensted, I confess that I relished it much less than usual, but every feeling of this description was dispersed as soon as I found we were in time for the run.

About thirty people were assembled, all riders, consisting of the attendants upon the hounds and men hunting with Conyers and the Puckeridge. The only two in pink were Bean and Garland. One of the two deer (brought down with the hounds by rail from Sawbridgeworth) was uncarted just below the church and ran down the road, and while giving him law of ten or twelve minutes and collecting a cap, Peters and Barker exhorted me to ride for *the honour of Essex*. As soon as old Meshech laid the hounds on it was evident that there was a burning scent, for they rattled down the road a capital pace for a quarter of a mile and then turned to the right, across country, bearing in the direction of White Roothing. They swept over this beautiful country at an excellent pace and though all out were riders, still the enclosures will always make a distinction. "Cognac" kept close with the hounds and did what a horse never did with me before, swerving towards a gap jumped on to a hound, making him yelp lustily but not preventing his going on.

Here Peters rode well up as did Firman of Stortford. The deer now made a ring which let up the tailors, and then crossed a road with a drop into it which old Meshech did well; and this was the last trace of our Huntsman, for he was very badly mounted, or the game old fellow would have been about in his usual place. Fortunately the scent was so good that the hounds required no hunting, and when a slight check occurred either Bean or Garland generally managed to creep up in time to render them what little assistance they required. At a rattling pace we ran by Stortford Town to Canfield Hart, where, checking a minute or two—not more—we raced for Dunmow. During this latter and quickest part Hobson and myself were leading, the former not having ridden forward up to Canfield Hart, but then, as is his wont, making a spurt and challenging "Cognac" to a race. This I prudently declined lest he should overpower me, as I had needed all my strength to ride and hold him in the run without racing, up to this point. I had seldom more than one or two couples of the leading hounds alongside me, and here I am almost ashamed to write—Hobson and myself were riding the deer (whom we had in view for a mile or two) being within fifty yards of him and ahead of the leading hounds.

Holding "Cognac," though with great difficulty owing to

Hobson's spurt, Hobson's mare was not sorry to go slower, and we allowed the leading hounds to resume their proper position. At this time the only others with the hounds were Francis Barker, Peters, and Jennings on Robinson's little mare. It had been proposed to whip off the hounds on getting so near the deer, but those who knew the country and saw how strongly the deer was running fortunately over-ruled it, stating, and truly, that in that case with the short pack (only six and a half couples) we should not take the deer. Hobson's spurt over, he fell into the old position and did not show particularly forward afterwards, and his place was taken by F. Barker. And now came the prettiest and straightest bit of the run and the longest, without even a momentary check—the hounds running in a line, as in fact they did all day, as hard as they could go, and F. Barker and myself riding parallel with them and with each other about 20 or 30 yards apart. Keeping our horses' heads straight and not interfering with each other or the hounds, in this way we rode for between twenty minutes and half-an-hour, and I enjoyed it much, for F. Barker rode quietly and well, as he always does.

"Cognac," therefore, went pleasantly as well as magnificently, taking all his fences, whether high bank, drops, or wide ditches, or all three combined, in superb style, frequently flying the whole lot, but never making a mistake, and in this way went by Dunmow to Stebbing where a check occurring at Barnston Brook let up the second flight. Thence to Little Saling with slow hunting up to Shalford, running by Gosfield towards Weathersfield, taking the stag in a pond on an off-hand farm belonging to Tabor, having passed Marriott's house, making a twenty mile point to point from where the deer was uncarted.

Towards the end it became, as it invariably does with a stag, very slow, so much so that I took refuge in Mr. Burder's stable for a smart snow shower. The run was certainly the very best I have ever witnessed in Essex or, I think I may say, anywhere else, because it possessed all the ingredients of a good run and there was no check caused by whipping-off hounds. It caused me to observe, while riding alongside Barker, more than once, "This is worth a whole season with Conyers," and all agreed that it was worthy of the best days of Sheffield Neave. We must have gone over thirty miles of country in rather more than three hours, and the last hour and a-half was slow, so that we must have gone at an amazing pace for the first hour and three-quarters as evidenced by the tailing off of the riders and distress of horses. At least one-third of the

field (including Stallibrass, Crouchman, on Adams' new chesnut) and Meshech were never seen again after the first twenty-five minutes. Bean, Garland, and the others belonging to the hounds could not live with them. The first went the best of the lot, and he could only creep up when a check occurred; he got a regular cropper and but for his horse refusing a fence would have gone right into a pond.

"Cognac's" mouth became pretty dead at the finish, and he pulled hard enough to straighten one of the curb hooks. F. Barker's horse towards the finish almost dropped and was only restored by bleeding him.

When I rode over the hound, I exclaimed to Peters, "Thank goodness I am not with Conyers!" and when in the latter part of the run I pulled up to allow the hounds to go through a gateway and was thanked by Bean and others for doing so, I could not help observing to Barker, "the luxury of riding over a hound without being blown up, and receiving thanks for not riding before the pack." A dozen times at least, I regretted that I had not my cap on, for I had to keep perpetually jamming my hat over my eyes to keep it on, and "Cognac" takes such a swing at his fences that near Canfield Hart he fairly shook it off my head.

We had twenty-five miles of road work before we reached home, coming by way of Bocking, Braintree, Waltham, Chelmsford, and Writtle, and reached Blackmore soon after 8 o'clock, making about eighty miles for the horses since they left their stable. Eighty miles and riding a horse like "Cognac" was tolerable work for his rider, and yet I felt in the evening, as Jack remarked, fresher and less fatigued than on any evening since he had been with me; so much for the exhilarating effects of sport. I enjoyed the run a second time in my dreams at night, but with the tragical result of "Cognac" dropping down dead with me in the field. Both horses were very stiff next day, and "Cognac's" sides rather rubbed and marked with the saddle where I had gripped him with my knees.

(On Monday, February 7th, 1848, Mr. Vickerman riding "Cognac" with the Baron had a nasty cropper. The horse was not so unpleasant to ride when going in front, but an unlucky turn with the stag on this day put him somewhat behind. As he came down to a brook at which some horses were stuck up, Mr. Vickerman says):—I had great difficulty keeping him to his line, and as I brought him down the field I felt that I had lost all command of him, and therefore though

the brook was unusually wide and looked boggy, and I was approaching it at a bend which made it wider, with an upright fence on the other side looking like a place which was beyond any horse's power to clear, and thinking that he must go clean into the fence if he cleared the brook, but knowing that in his present mood I should get into difficulties if I attempted to stop him, I exclaimed, "You brute! if you will have it you shall," and applying the persuaders put him straight at it, when to my astonishment he cleared the whole scarcely touching a twig, and was over the following fence in a twinkling. His blood, however, was now thoroughly up, his mouth dead; the hounds unluckily coming to a check, and the fields small and strongly fenced, being paddocks near a farmhouse, I was unable to stop him. I jumped one or two fences and avoided other places until we came to a small paddock with trees of about twenty or thirty years' growth in the hedge, thickly planted, and a brook beyond. Though impracticable I saw he intended to have it; I was powerless to stop him, having used the short rein on my left arm to no purpose, and there was not room to turn him even if I had the power to do so. A disaster being inevitable, I considered what was best to be done, and removing my feet from the stirrups and loosening my seat in the saddle just as he came to the trees, and charged the place, letting go of the reins I shifted myself in the saddle throwing my right side and shoulder forward and keeping back my head. The next moment, after being suspended in the trees for a second, in fact forced between them by the impetus of the horse, I dropped on to my back in the brook, under water, but thanks to being a swimmer reached the other side easily.

"Cognac" who had been nearly if not entirely under water too, was caught in the farmyard and brought back to me, but having lost my whip I was looking in the water hoping to see it, and endeavouring in vain to induce the yokels to venture after it, when casting up my eyes I saw it suspended in the trees marking the spot where I had descended, and Roffey the old Huntsman who then rode up said, "I should not have thought horse and man could have come alive out of such a place." I remounted, but the hounds being laid on again, "Cognac" immediately bolted up a hill with me, I felt exhausted, my right leg weak and powerless; fearing that I might damage some one else as well as myself, as soon as I was able to stop him I dismounted, led him a little way and then rode back to Tring, wet through, without gloves, and bitterly cold.

There I had a dry change, of which I availed myself, and putting my feet in warm water I escaped without cold, which was scarcely to be hoped considering my recent illness, state of health and sudden quenching in the brook. Had I not preserved my presence of mind and shifted my position as I came to the trees, I consider that I must have been seriously hurt if not killed, but as it is, I escaped with a contusion on the knee and leg. How lamentable that "Cognac" should almost more than counterbalance his extraordinary powers by such a temper and mouth. He went at the trees with the steady determination and the despairing stride with which he went at the gate by Canfield Hart last season, and so nearly rolled over. When in that mind I believe no abyss would stop his progress so as to prevent his plunging into it.

(In a day with the Quorn at Six Hills, on March 11th, 1848, when most of the field had gone home, Mr. Vickerman, riding a hireling which gave him a rare cropper in the early part of the day, came in for a good hunting run of an hour, finishing off in a covert of Mr. Fox's of Wyvendon, in the Vale of Langar. Captain Houblon of Hallingbury, being one of those who stayed for the finish. Mr. Fox was very hospitable and provided a capital luncheon in his fine old house (Mr. Vickerman does not say at what hour) but that he sat next to Sir Richard Sutton, who recognised him in spite of the mud bath he had had, and made the remark, "I like to see a man come home dirty, but these Melton gentlemen are wonderfully afraid of a little mud," alluding to the bulk of the field who, hearing they were going to draw the Widmerpool country had turned homewards.

How Mr. Vickerman hunted his horses "Carlow" and "Cognac" in Essex, Thursday, March 16th, and had them at Melton in readiness for Saturday, March 18th, and how he joined other Meltonians for a day with the Pytchley at Cold Ashby, getting to Crick in a cattle truck, and of the sport that followed, is it not written in his "Diary"? As also his experiences on a hireling on March 25th, in a run with the Quorn from Cream Gorse to ground at Frisby Station in an eighteen or twenty minutes' burst in which Mr. Gilmour, Lord Wilton, Captain Maynard, Mr. Geary and Mr. Vickerman's friend, Mr. Watkins, showed the way?

On April 11th, Mr. Vickerman did not find a snaffle and gag bit very satisfactory for holding "Cognac" in a run with staghounds, if he did his discussion with two policemen at Hatfield Heath, on the failure of the Chartist demonstrations of

the previous day, through the excellence of the arrangements made to prevent its ill-effects, and the duties of special constables, of which honourable corps he had been made a member, going on duty at Gray's Inn.

At the end of the entry of the day's sport with staghounds at High Easter Bury on April 17th, the following notes occur) :—

"This closes a very unlucky season, both as regards myself and my stud, especially annoying from the openness and moisture of the weather from first to last. My knee continues very weak, and I must really give it a chance now that hunting is over, by abstinence from exertion in riding or walking, continuing Colvin's remedies of the douche bath with white of egg bandage, and Hugh Davis' edition of iodine application at night. My stud rather bothers me too, without having much time to give to its consideration ; something is wrong, and a considerable drawback exists in regard to each horse. "Carlow" will require firing again in the off fore-leg, and his wind has been so much worse this season that I can scarcely expect him to be of much further service for the future than as a covert hack. But I must never part with him to allow the fine old fellow to get into bad hands, and he is far too good to dispense with as long as he will last in any shape. "Cognac's" lameness seems to be cured, for he is as sound as he was when the season began ; but his temper and mouth are far from being improved, and I have had much more trouble with him this season than last, which has disappointed my expectations. Much of this, however, I attribute to my indisposition following my accident,* both of which have considerably impaired my strength. Next season I hope to be more fortunate with him, and give him more amusement, and the prospect of the staghounds (Parker's) being continued offers an additional inducement to keep him in hope of improvement. This now completes two seasons with him, which is much longer than as far as I can hear, he has ever been kept as a hunter by any previous owner ; for though only eight years old this spring, it is curious to hear the number of hands he has passed through. I think of handling him a little during the summer to prevent his getting so wild, and have yet to try him with hounds in the Chifney bit, made after my own device, in which he has only once been ridden by Beckington, who reported it as a failure. "Champagne" fairly puzzles me, but not for the first time, for

* Hurt by a fall from "Cognac."

he has been a continual puzzle, and causing regret and trouble ever since I have had him.

Saturday, November 4th, 1848. Row Wood was the fixture with Mr. Conyer's hounds to-day for the first day's regular hunting. The morning bleak and raw, a cold wind blowing strongly, &c., &c.; "Cognac" very fresh, pulling hard, and going at his fences like a locomotive, but made no mistake, &c. On Monday, November 6th, at Willingale, he did. Hounds running slowly from White Roothing, "Cognac" became intolerably troublesome and unmanageable. I allowed them to creep on to Brick Kilns, and then took a line to them which "Cognac" performed in steeplechase fashion and time. After hanging a short time in covert, they drew slowly on, and I was about joining them again when Palmer, of Leaden Roothing (the "King William") being in the way, creeping down the side of a fence, I called to him to move on and then put "Cognac" at the fence. It was but a small one, but he went at it at his usual slashing pace, slipped into the ditch and fell on the other side, throwing me clean on my head, my heels going over, and so on to my back, a complete somersault. It tried the strength of my neck and vertebræ and shook me not a little. Fortunately, it escaped my knee, but feeling my head and neck somewhat affected and the fox being lost, I turned homewards on my road, reflecting on the different behaviour of the two horses—the pleasure of riding "Carlow" close to hounds, and the impossibility of getting "Cognac" near them, except when they are going at racing pace, which so seldom happens—and the loss of all the pleasure of hunting at other times, it occurred to me that, after all, I am paying too dear for my whistle in allowing the pride of riding a horse, which had foiled all others to counterbalance the drawbacks of being pulled and hauled about, as my friends will have it; and to-day with great appearance of truth risking life and limb in riding such a horse. I cannot deny that he is unfit for hunting and that steeple-chasing is rather his *forte*.

Thomas Helme very kindly called at Blackmore to learn if I were hurt and reiterated the oft-repeated regrets at my riding the horse, and Beckington, notwithstanding the brilliant condition of the horse, seemed quite delighted at my expressing a doubt whether I should continue to hunt "Cognac." Thinking it better to act before a good run had perhaps put me into good humour with "Cognac," I wrote at once to Smart, Watkins, and Benbow, as to getting rid of him and supplying his place and that of "Champagne" with two others.

Monday, November 27th. A heavy rain in the night ushered in a beautiful and springlike morning. The fixture was Navestock, but we went on to Sir Digby Neave's coverts, all of which were drawn blank, to the obvious vexation of Sheffield Neave, &c., &c. Another blank day, long and dragging through mire and much wearying to spirits and body, and tiresome and fretting to horses. I must really go occasionally with the Harriers to get something like sport, for the whole of November has passed without the semblance of any.

Mr. Kortwright rode a chestnut mare sold to him by Cassidy, and which had belonged to Tom Hodgson, though not ridden by him. She has been recommended to me, but being said to be plain I had not made any enquiries about her. She is plain and looks more like a hack than a hunter, and is withal somewhat hot and has something to learn. At an early gap she seemed not to rise at all, and gave Kortwright a cropper, covering him with dirt and tearing his coat. I caught the mare for him.

Monday, December 18th. Yesterday was a lovely springlike day after the incessant rain of the preceding forty-eight hours, and this morning also broke finely, though the atmosphere was so raw that when I first went out of doors, not feeling well, I shuddered. However, hacking "Wide-awake" to the meet at Writtle race-course, and with "Carlow" ridden by Beckington, I soon warmed in the genial sunshine. A large field out including three generations of Tufnells, and young Harry Bramstone and Tower, the former on a very clever pretty little horse bought of Cassidy, &c. Running towards Leaden Wood, just as I landed over a wide place in the road on "Wide-awake," old Palmer was jogging past. I jokingly rowed him, saying, "The very devil must be in you, Palmer, for you are everlastingly in my way whenever I am jumping into a road."

Tuesday, December 26th. The fixture was Leaden Roothing, and having to show "Cognac" to Biss, who was coming especially from Cheltenham to see him, I sent on "Wide-awake" by eleven, in the hope of having time, after showing "Cognac" over a fence or two, to join the hounds by riding on with Biss towards the meet, and talking of details as we went in the event of his thinking the horse likely to suit him. He got to Blackmore soon after eleven o'clock, Frank having kindly driven to Brentwood to meet him; and having the horses ready saddled I mounted "Cognac," putting him on "Peep o' Day," and Beckington on "Carlow." We went

through St. Mary's Mead into Partridge Hills, when being anxious to lose no time in letting him see "Cognac" go and jump, as the time was running very close for getting to Leaden Roothing, I offered to ride him a short round and turned him over the fence into further Partridge Hills, which he flew beautifully; then across the brook into further Blacklands, over the fence, near the covert, into Spring field, which had been recently ploughed, and was desperately heavy, and had a very awkward fence out of it into the Twenty Acres. I steadied him therefore across the field, and made him take his time at the fence, which he did very well. Then I took the circuit of the Twenty Acres (which he was inclined to avoid) into the turnip field called Nick Adams; and then turning to the right jumped the fence into Broad Meadows, which he did well, and then right down the meadows towards the fence, separating this field from nearer Blacklands, in which fence with ditch towards I had ordered hurdles to be placed on the top of the bank, being the last fence before the brook which I had determined should complete my circuit.

As soon as the horse had jumped into Broad Meadows and found his head set towards the hurdles in the fence, I could perceive that he recognised an unusual appearance and that he would do his best to avoid them. However, the jump would certainly have been a rasper for any horse, however powerful and fresh. I had, perhaps, too much confidence in the horse's powers so that I did not make sufficient allowance for the very heavy state of the ground after the frost, and his having done no work for a month or more, and did not, therefore, pay sufficient attention to certain indications of his being rather blown, not allowing him to refuse and taking him too quickly at the fence to permit him to stop, which he did his best to do. Making an attempt to jump it askew towards the other horses then approaching, his hind legs, after sliding two or three yards along the turf, dropped into the ditch, and he fell with tremendous violence on his near side on the other side of the fence, breaking down the hurdles and going with such force as to bring his hind legs well after him and clear of the ditch. He fell on to my left leg and foot, bringing my left shoulder into collision with the ground. Getting clear of him, in an instant I was on my legs, and observed that he had positively ploughed up a large space in the turf with his side which retained the impression of it, but on attempting to shake myself as usual, I found that on this occasion it would not do, and that I could not stand upright

and had lost all power of my left side and arm (shoulder out). Biss tried "Cognac" afterwards as to paces and likes him all—but his mouth, &c.

With my usual luck the hounds found a fox at Leaden Roothing, and ran him to the Blackmore High Woods.

This is a week of disasters. On Friday evening, as I was about to retire to my bedroom, a messenger on horseback brought me a letter from Mould of the "White Hart," announcing that poor Frank* had been the subject of a railway accident. The particulars which I afterwards learned were, that returning by the mail train, and being in the rearmost division of a carriage by himself, he had fallen asleep, and awaking suddenly as the train was about stopping at the Brentwood Station, he imagined it to be just starting from the station towards Chelmsford, and that he would be carried beyond his destination. Opening the door and stepping out hastily while the train was still in motion, something would appear to have caught either his foot or his clothes, for though he alighted on his feet on the platform he was instantly drawn backwards, and fell on to the railway between the carriage he had quitted and the next one.

Providentially, something (perhaps the connecting chain between the carriages) broke or changed the direction of his fall, for instead of falling across the rails, in which case death or at least the loss of a limb would have been inevitable, he fell lengthwise between them, with his head towards Ingatestone, and his right shoulder so close to the near rail that the flange of the first wheel pressed it into the soft ground, and cut two small but very deep wounds in the muscle of his arm between the elbow and shoulders, in addition to bruising severely the whole arm from the shoulder to the fingers. Two pennyworth of half-pence in his coat pocket singularly lodged on the rail and canted the wheel in some degree off the shoulders and arms, leaving their impressions on his railway ticket, which was literally cut in two in his pocket. He did not wait for the second wheel, but drawing his arm to him and turning on his side fortunately escaped all further injury, and the train immediately after stopping, the porters who witnessed the accident came with lanthorns and extricated him from his perilous position. He lost a good deal of blood and fainted on his way to the "White Hart," where every attention was paid to him by Mould, and he remains under the care of

* Frank Vickerman.

Butler of Brentwood, till Monday. The newspapers may fairly head their reports of the accident "Miraculous Preservation." His arm continues much swollen, and will require great care to heal the wounds, but fortunately not a joint or bone is injured, and he is in the pure air and quiet of the country, without the necessity, as in my case, of having to hurry to town to attend to business, while still unwell and quite unfit for it. He has a solace too in Charlotte, so near a neighbour, so that having every chance and every inducement to get well, he must soon be himself again.

Wormald having advised me so earnestly to give my shoulder every chance by avoiding a repetition of the dislocation, in which case the rent in the capsule will never heal, I put myself in his hands and kept my arm in a sling for six weeks, and abstained from hunting, allowing the Rev. F. Fane to ride "Wide-awake" and "Peep o' Day" regularly, and "Carlow" once with the Blackmore Beagles.

February 24th. Mr. Petre's Harriers at Writtle. This being, I believe, the last day that Fane rode any of my horses, I may record his opinion of them. He believes "Peep o' Day" to be, without exception, the best horse he has ever ridden, though he had ridden "Arbutus" the steeplechase horse, &c., &c.

Saturday, April 14th, 1849. As a wind-up to the season a drag with the Blackmore Beagles came off to-day, starting in the Priory Meadows and finishing up at Mr. Fane's house, where he had provided a dinner. Fane rode his pony, his brother in-law Ballard also rode. W. Kortwright, Livimore, and one or two more were also mounted. "Carlow" was the only horse that at all attempted to go with them, so that the gallant old fellow being unmolested, enjoyed himself while sailing away alongside the miniature pack. Fane, to do him justice, would have ridden had he not spared his pony, and knowing the line selected (which I had no previous notion of), and availing himself of the roads and short cuts, got on very well and charged the bush hurdles in Myless gallantly, but his pony swerving right in front of "Carlow," I had some little difficulty to avoid riding over him.

Abraham Caton who officiated as Huntsman, went surprisingly well, and would puzzle any one on two legs to ride with him across country. The line of country selected was about eight miles, embracing thirty-two jumps and the ground was very heavy. The drag was carried by four men in succession, two on foot and two on horseback, and the distance

was accomplished in forty minutes by the leading two couple of hounds, they with old "Carlow" running up to the drag just as it entered the last meadow. I had no notion that "Beagles" could run a drag so well, or could go the pace and distance. It is true that only two couple (led by Tattler) ran fairly up to the finish, the rest tailing off from the unusual severity of the run. Altogether I enjoyed the gallop, and the drag was by no means a bad wind-up (to me) of an unlucky and unsatisfactory season.

Since the dislocation of my shoulder, I have had only one fall, which was with "Carlow," in the good day with Marriott, and, as a matter of fact, came right on to the game shoulder; but I had my shoulder brace on, and the cause of the fall prevented its hurting me—very soft ground on alighting—from a jump newly trenched, so that the horse sank up to his shoulder and rolled over with and nearly upon me."

(After running "Cognac" in the Craven Handicap at the Coventry steeplechases on March 13th, when Lord Chesterfield's horse "The Victim" turned up the winner, and "Cognac" ridden by Benbow fell, Mr. Vickerman makes the following note in his journal):—I returned to town that same evening voting steeplechasing a bore and loss of time, except to an idle man who had time for this as well as hunting and other amusements. To be a spectator merely is tantalizing to one fond of riding, and I should feel with Lord Strathmore, that to care much for this kind of sport, it was requisite to combine with it the riding of one's own horse.

1849. At the suggestion of Clifton, Jessopp, &c., and in accordance with my own inclination, I joined the West Essex Yeomanry this season, receiving from Capt. Palmer the only vacant appointment—that of asst. quarter-master. Smith and Co., of Piccadilly, provided my outfit, and Kidd supplied the horse gear and trappings. "Rocket" was my charger, and beautiful he looked, exciting universal admiration, there being no handsomer horse in the troop; but excited and fidgetty with the novelty of the scenes and requiring some riding. Mustered at Epping on Monday, June 11th, and marched to our quarters for this year at Waltham Abbey. I was quartered in the old barracks until I procured a room at the "Cock," Corporal Algers.

Tuesday. A ball at Waltham Cross "New Inn;" met Kenwards.

Wednesday and Thursday in town on leave of absence.

Friday, the 15th, had a capital and merry dinner at Jessopp's, and afterwards to a ball at Christie's, of Hoddesdon.

Saturday, 16th. Practised in the meadow at Broxbourne and dinner at the Old Rye House.

Sunday, 17th. Church at Waltham Abbey and excellent dinner at Colvin's.

Monday, 18th. Grand field day on Broxbourne Marshes, with the Hertfordshire Yeomanry, reviewed by General Fearon. Mock fight with artillery and skirmishing. Dined in tents with the Hertfordshire and returned by barge. "Rocket" much lighter from his week's excitement and bad hay.

Began the season, 1849-50, by joining Mr. Frederick Petre's harriers at Bush Wood, on Crooks' Farm. The morning mild, close and foggy, with a light rain falling until about mid-day. The harriers, 9½ couple, being mostly foxhound bitches between 20 and 22 inches, looking very clean bred and in excellent condition and working and running very well together. Petre takes a great interest in them and improves his pack each year, having a fine range of country. In place of F. Barker he has a servant this season as whip, but I think he will miss the efficient help of the former, &c., &c. Thos. Helme and W. Kortwright were out in the afternoon, each having lost a horse since last season, the former his favourite old "Jack," who went blind, and the latter his young brown horse from getting hurt in the stifle while out at grass.

"Cognac" preserves his character of an "unlucky horse" in every particular. He was not lame when turned rough and blistered in the early part of June, and seemed quite sound when taken up in the middle of August, but with walking exercise merely he fell lame in the same leg that looked so sound when he returned from Benbow, &c.; there seems nothing for it but to put him to ploughing and other work on the farm.

Riding for the Brush.

After meeting at Mr. Barnard's, Little Canfield Hall, on Saturday, November 17th, 1849, and running a fox from Hoglands for one and three-quarter hours, the field was reduced to a select half-dozen, consisting of Will Orvis, the Huntsman, Household, Chafey, Robb, Mr. Woodbridge, while I was riding my favourite "Wide Awake"; the hounds evidently felt their fox was sinking, and smelling blood, increased their pace until the last two or three fields they were running in view. A kill in the open being evident, each one of the select half-dozen bethought himself of the brush, and as the fox, as they commonly do when sinking, kept turning, each one had an equal chance. Household and Chafey especially were racing

against each other, and in their emulation did not sufficiently observe a sudden turn to the left, and went on leading the others after them until they came to an impracticable fence which they could not surmount, and which prevented them seeing the fox pulled down.

Thanks to a temperate horse, I had quietly observed their proceedings, and as soon as the fox and hounds turned to the left, instead of going with the rest straight on, I charged the fence in the only practicable place, and saw the fox pulled down, being within 50 yards at the time (as Will was not 200 yards off, though pounded); I sat quietly on my horse, without interfering with the hounds, and watched them breaking him up, when, to my amusement, Chafey came bundling through the fence afoot, having left his mare on the other side, and laying into the hounds with his whip, seized hold of the dead carcase and claimed the brush. However, I insisted on my right, and Chafey, no doubt feeling that it was mine, did not press his claim, but contented himself with the head.

Every one was delighted with the good day's sport and glorious finish, and none more so than that fine old sportsman, Mr. Woodbridge, who having provided us with plenty of foxes during the day now provided us with a luncheon. "Wide Awake's" forehead in the meantime having been decorated with the brush by Joe, and about ten minutes or a quarter of an-hour having elapsed, up came Charles Tyrrell, who seeing me with "Carlow" on Monday, observed that I stuck to the old horse and left the long tails, "Wide Awake" and "Peep o' Day" for my groom, so that in the early part of the first run I pointed out that I was riding one of the long tails. Afterwards, in the early part of the first run, when the scent was bad and we could not get on, I was riding very quietly either through a gateway or following others through gaps, when C. Tyrrell said laughingly, "This is the way you ride the long tails;" therefore, when he had come up after the finish, I turned "Wide Awake's" head towards him ornamented with the brush, and pointing to the latter replied, "This is the way I ride the long tails!"

It is singular that long as I have hunted with Conyers, this is the first time I have ever been out when a fox has fairly been pulled down in the open after a good run; all the kills I have witnessed (including even the noted Row Wood fox), being either in or at the side of a covert or in a ditch, therefore I was proportionately pleased to have witnessed the pulling down, and being mounted on one of my new horses unused to the country, made it doubly gratifying.

(After describing a very merry day's sport from a Leaden Roothing meet on Monday, November 19th, during which Button, on his grey, went like a sportsman, and Rolt, on his chestnut, rode as if he liked the fun, as did Coope, Edward Round, Household and Joddrell, Mr. Vickerman notes that four and a-half brace of foxes were moved (two of them Irishmen, turned down by Sir J. Tyrell in Lord's), and that he had never seen so many foxes in the Roothings. And that the season had not only opened well but promised to continue so, though it was tantalising to have so many horses laid up with trivial accidents while there was the promise of sport.

Mr. Vickerman's horses must soon have recovered, for on Monday, November 26th, the following entry occurs) :— Another brush, and with my other new horse, seems to show that fortune, which has of late been all against me, has this season taken a turn in my favour. Success was the more pleasing to-day from being mounted on "Peep o' Day" for the second time only with hounds, though I have had him for a twelvemonth, and a game and plucky little fellow he is (though not little after all, for it is his compactness which gives him that appearance), feeling like a castle under me, and yet able to gallop like the wind and skim a yawner like a swallow.

The fixture was at Mr. Williams', close to Row Wood, of which covert he is proprietor, and who has recently married a nice little wife, fond of horses and hunting and to whom he introduced me as the taker of the brush on Saturday week. After waiting in the cold until the Squire came up in his brougham (he was too unwell to ride), getting away up wind, with a fox, they ran him to ground in ten minutes. After capping for this performance we drew Waters Grove, Bamborough Springs and Bromsted, and were about leaving the latter Springs when up came some men with our hunted fox in a sack. A subscription for the men was then made and the fox turned down close to Bromsted Springs (after a very good run), the fox was pulled down within a dozen yards of Mr. Vickerman ; next came Joe Reeve on his chestnut, for which he asked £300, and then Cassidy, who had been riding in expectation of a turn in the other direction, and after him Joe and two or three others, and Will on "Tomboy," a splendid jumper, but who never could go, and was now unnerved and about used up. As Mr. Vickerman gave the first whip, Joe, his customary half-sovereign on taking the brush, he observed "that if his recent luck continued he would be ruined before the season was over," &c., &c.

(As Mr. Vickerman returned home with "Peep o' Day's" forehead ornamented with the brush, he called at the Priory and delighted the children not a little by taking "Peep o' Day" into the hall, and shutting the door to keep out the cold: and very well and quietly he stood and behaved, not at all caring for the bright fire in the hall, which looked cheery and comfortable, nor the lights, nor the exclamations of the children. He looked twice his size in his unusual position, and made the old hall assume an air which recalled the scenes and descriptions of halls of old manor houses in the days of chivalry, or at least those of the Cavaliers.

Saturday, December 22nd, Little Canfield Hall. Owing to frost Sir Charles Smith, Helme and Kortwright were the only ones who showed. Though ploughs were going in all directions, hounds did not hunt, so Mr. Vickerman took a beeline of his own across country straight to Canfield Church, and then from Leaden Roothing to Nine Ashes, jumping some forty fences. At Nine Ashes he called on Abraham Caton, who soon had his beagles out and gave him a run with a hare. Mr. Vickerman dearly loved a ride home across country (that sort of thing would not be allowed at the present time.—Ed.), for on Saturday, January 4th, 1850, after an indifferent day in the Fyfield country, he and his nephew Jack (who was riding "The Queen"), in company with Tom Mashiter and a stranger, who had recently taken Ditchleys (Mr. Blomfield), came across country, leaving Fingrith Hall on the right; nearing Blackmore, both he and his nephew got down at the last fence.)

Mr. Vickerman writes:—"Our new pastor, James Hodges, dined with us last night, with the Fanes and the Gills; I trust that he will be as much liked as Fane (whose going is universally regretted and for whom the parishioners are getting up some testimonial, to the subscription list of which I gladly added my name)."

(Comments after a bye-day with the Puckeridge, at Widford on February 1st, 1850, when Eastwick Wood, a covert of 160 acres, edging the beautiful Gilston Estate, sold just previous to that date to Mr. John Hodgson by Mr. Vickerman's firm, sustained its reputation by providing two foxes and two runs.) The country is not to be compared to Conyers', there are so many headlands and green road-ways through the centre of fields leading to gates, that even the foxes seem to prefer running down them than over the soft ploughed land on either side, and the fences are very blind and straggling, so that one finds oneself galloping with the ruck and going unsatisfactorily,

bringing one to one's old conclusion that though the Master and Huntsman are undeniably good, and though they seem always to have foxes and sport, one spin of half an hour across the Roothings with a flying fox is worth a month in such a country.

Saturday, February 2nd. To-day realised my conclusion of yesterday. It looked like a hunting morning, the wind, still S.W., had greatly moderated and a slight mist, scarcely to be called rain, was falling. The fixture was Fyfield, and the draw in the right direction, viz., Norwood, where we found *instanter*, running a cracker from Brick Kilns and Man Wood to Matching Green, where a check occurred at some cottage gardens and, it was feared he had beaten us. But hitting it off, Stallibrass, myself, and one or two others attempted to get to hounds through a farmyard, but an Amazon proprietress stood on the other side of the gate and positively refused to let us through, proof alike against persuasion or threats, and it being evident that nothing but force (which as against a woman was not to be thought of) would clear the way, we had to retrace our steps and lost not a little, which cost our horses an effort to recover; running by Down Hall, Sheering and nearly up to the Forest, pulling their fox down by Hyde Hall Springs. Captain Tower, Will and others saying the brush belonged to me I took it. Chafey, Captain Tower, Jessopp, Stallibrass, Household and Sam Reeve were well in the run, which lasted sixty-five minutes and must have covered twelve miles.

Will, the Huntsman, was lauding the beauty of the fox's head, which significantly reminded me of a promise to give him a cup after some good run; I therefore told him to give me the head, which he very gladly did. Though barely 1 o'clock we did not draw again, and went home, "Peep o' Day" decorated with brush and head, looking changed in his appearance since the morning, but every inch a hunter after the tug-of-war.

Monday, March 18th. 'Twas a lovely morning for anything but hunting, though the wind was still N.E. there was but little of it, and the bright sunshine was warm and gave a cheerful appearance to the scene, though the moat was covered with ice. After an agreeable walk in the garden of the old Priory with the Miss Harveys, I started for Boynton Hall, where a deer was to be uncarted before Petre's Harriers. An untried hind, provided by James Parker, was uncarted about a quarter before one, and evidently had to learn her business, for she was disinclined to go away and kept returning until driven off by F. Barker. The hounds (consisting of Petre's Harriers, which

are dwarf foxhounds with draft hounds from the Union Pack), being laid on could make nothing of it, which was not to be wondered at seeing that the fallows were as hard and dry as brickbats and the state of the ground made one quake for a valuable horse.

So we proceeded at a foot's pace towards Good Easter, many despairing of a run, but I tried to keep up their spirits and my own by saying that the hind would probably wait for us and that when we came up with her and the hounds got a view we should be able to go; and so it proved, for after five to ten minutes of this slow work we dropped on her in a bush and went away at score in view, pointing first to the right and then making a short double to the left, across some very awkward, and in many places impracticable fences. Over anxious, I started with them to the right and lost considerable distance by the sudden turn which was all in favour of the quieter and more prudent individuals who had remained on the left, and got a good start. Frank Barker, on a surprisingly clever colt only three years old, but 16½ hands high, unfortunately touched in his wind, went away with the lead and rode admirably throughout the day as if he had been on a trained hunter. Sam Reeve, on his clever chestnut, soon joined him and then followed in various order, but the foremost always a field or two behind the leaders, F. Petre on his large brown mare, Captain Tower on a fine old white horse of Follet's, Blomfield on his clever Irish mare, W. Kortwright on his brown mare, these four being in pink; with Thomas Helme on his brown horse, Coope, Wm. Barker, Dan the whip, and various others, in places varying according to their luck and pluck.

When I had surmounted the awkward fence which my turn to the right had let me in for, and got into the line of hounds, I found I had a terrible distance to make up, for I could not see the leading riders, let alone the leading hounds. However, I knew "Wide Awake's" powers as well as his foibles, and therefore keeping my eye steadily on the leading rider, who was visible to me, I rode perfectly straight for him, turning as he turned and prevented "Wide Awake" from what he so much desired, hanging after the other horses, whom I kept steadily passing in succession. By so doing I rapidly gained ground and made up for my bad start, and sooner than I should have anticipated, found myself in a meadow with the four men in pink only half the length of the field in advance of me, causing me to think that the pinks were showing well in the run, as they certainly looked well in the sunshine.

When gallantly charging the fence out of the meadow, two

out of the four were down with their horses' hoofs uppermost and pinks prostrate; the other two seemed rather in difficulty, as if from sympathy with their companions. Though I have, of course, seen many a man and horse down in the hunting-field, I don't think I was ever so much struck with the resemblance to the pictures of hunting disasters as on the present occasion—I suppose from having been watching them going well and their misadventure coming so suddenly, and seeing four horses just before me go at a fence and two only get over and the other two left behind. The unfortunate two were Blomfield and Kortwright, the former hurt his side from having an awkward square-cornered flask in his pocket, and the mare of the latter got away from him. Avoiding the *débris* by jumping the fence a little to the left of them, I speedily passed the two survivors and then caught the leading hounds in company with F. Barker and S. Reeve, until at a slight check in the road Helme joined us.

Hitting it off again directly, it was now my turn to lead with F. Barker and S. Reeve in attendance and in this order we went until the former fearing, not without reason, that he might be giving the young ones too much of a dose, cried out that he must now leave it to the old ones. Having come in this manner over the cream of our country by Good Easter, High Easter, Lord's Wood, High Roothing, to the meadows below the latter place, and Great Canfield, in fifty minutes from the start, but only about thirty or forty going as hard as we could lick and being reduced to one hound, we whipped off to let the rest of the pack up. Well up at this point were S. Reeve and Barker, Helme, Captain Tower, Blomfield, Petre, Dan the whip, Coope, and W. Barker, and afterwards seen dropping in, Joe Reeve, the Christy's, Barlow on his clever dun pony, Willis, and some others. A general enquiry was made for James Barker, who had started on a fine bay horse, but he was missing, as was his groom.

After tolerable time the hounds were laid on by the side of the brook and came up to where the hind had taken refuge and many thought they were going to take her and did not seem sorry, having had enough; but from the style in which she jumped out, I exclaimed that we should not take her for an hour, and so it proved, for after dodging about the brook some time and distance, which gave the horses every chance, she finally left it and went away in view, not a field before the hounds, as straight as a line and as hard as we could lick, by Canfield Mount and so on to Little Canfield Hall and towards Lord

Maynard's. Joe Reeve, on his strong chestnut started off saying "They'll kill her," but kept to a line of gates and so soon dropped out of it. I followed immediately, exclaiming "They won't catch her yet," accompanied by Samuel Reeve, and during all the straight running he and I were keeping our respective lines without another soul near the hounds and having some awkward fences and deep roads to cross.

We came to a check just before dropping into a deep hard lane without a bit of sward to light on. An old hurdle stood in a gap and I asked a churl of a fellow to remove it to save the drop on to the hard road; but he refused and to save my horse I therefore charged an awkward fence to my left into the next field, when down he came giving me a purler, falling partly on my back but alighting on the muscular projection between the left shoulder and neck, and catching my small ribs on the same side, thus hurting myself above and below, but just avoiding my bad shoulder which was unprotected by the brace. Though the hardness of the ground knocked the breath out of me I was so enraged at the fellow's churlishness, that I jumped up and ran towards him, more than half disposed to give him a taste of my whip, but he fortunately grunted out something about riding over "his land," which brought me to my senses by causing me to reflect that it would not quite do to assault a man on his own territory. And therefore contenting myself with a short jobation I ran after "Wide Awake," and not before it was time, for he was in a very dangerous position, pawing at the fence into the road with both his forelegs entangled in the reins and only prevented from attempting to jump into the road in this state by young Barker, who being in the road was very kindly and thoughtfully preventing him from making the attempt with his whip.

Shortly after this we took the deer in a ditch in Lord Maynard's park, having been running two hours all but five minutes. Altogether it was the best thing with stag I have seen for a long time. If we had chosen our line of country it could not have been better, and the pace which we were going was first-rate, for during three-quarters of the running the game was in view—another test of its goodness, almost every one had a fall, *e.g.*, Kortwright (2), Blomfield, Captain Tower, Helme, and Coope. The distance was eleven miles from point to point, and sixteen or eighteen by the line taken by the deer.

Easter Monday, April 1st, 1850. A marked improvement in the weather has occurred. Yesterday it rained a little in showers which seemed to make everything grow and the birds

rejoice, though the parched ground gained but little benefit from it. This morning was genial and warm, cloudy, with the wind south-east, and looking like a hunting morning. Having been unable to induce Fane and his friends to change the day for the drag with the Beagles to-day, so as to allow me to see it, I go with the stag to-morrow. I was dressing to await the foxhounds at Blackmore when Mr. Conyers' huntsman was announced, and going downstairs in my dressing gown, I saw Will, who had been sent round by the Squire to myself, Petre, Helme, and others in the neighbourhood, to say that the hounds were not coming to-day, but that they would be at Old Samford at the end of the week.

I was voting myself unlucky and the Squire very annoying, when Will reminded me of the Easter Hunt at the "Roebuck," on Buckhurst Hill, in Epping Forest, and considering that I had never seen the far-famed hunt immortalised by Hood, I decided upon going. I told Will that had the hounds come to Blackmore to-day, I had intended to present him with the Cup and christen it at the same time, in drinking health to himself and success to foxhunting, but as it was he had better take the present opportunity of taking it home on his return from Writtle Park. The inscription on the Cup is as follows:—

"To William Offys* (*sic*)—Huntsman to Henry James Conyers, Esq., the Essex Hounds—this Cup, made from the head of a gallant fox found on Saturday, February 2nd, 1850, in Norwood, and killed near Hyde Hall, after an excellent run of one hour and five minutes, being one of the best of a very good season with these hounds, was presented as well in commemoration of the run as an acknowledgment of his efficiency, civility and general good conduct in the field during the nine seasons out of the twenty he has been with Mr. Conyers, to which the donor can bear testimony.—His sincere well wisher, CHARLES RANKEN VICKERMAN.

"*Blackmore, March 11th*, 1850."

Mr. Vickerman's diary goes on:—Intending only to have a look at the Cockneys, and having heard that the stag rarely if ever left the Forest, and seldom ran more than a mile or two, I decided upon riding "Chancellor" (who, having been so recently taken up, was not in hunting condition). And with Beckington on "Trap" (kindly lent by Williams) proceeded to the scene of action by way of Navestock, Passingford Bridge, Abridge, Chigwell, and across the fields to Buckhurst Hill, arriving there about a quarter to two, and meeting a motley assemblage of horsemen, foot people, carts crammed

* Should be "William Orvis."—ED.

with occupants, and other vehicles of every description—music playing, flags flying, and all the concomitants of a racing rather than a hunting scene. Colvin, Robert Helme, the Jessopps, Davis's and others, were there, and seemed mightily amused to see me.

The turn-out of the Cockney sportsmen disappointed me, being mostly seedy dark coats and trousers, there being only one hero in pink of regular Cockney features and cut, but mounted on a chestnut horse by no means to be despised, and who honoured me by selecting me as his guide up to the first check, after which I saw him not until the finish.

At about a quarter past two, up came the cart containing the stag with three men on the roof with horns playing "Old Towler" with gusto, until a sudden jolt silenced the melody of one of the nightingales, by sending him, horn and all, toppling off on to the wheel and thence amongst the crowd, another of the trio only just escaping a similar fate.

The capping process having been generally accomplished and the doors of the cart being opened, out jumped the stag, his remnants of horns decorated with gaudily coloured ribands; he had to turn down a perfect lane of people on either side, holloaing and whooping like mad. At length the poor brute escaped from the crowd and took to the Forest, and the hounds (five couple belonging to Rounding, the landlord of the "Roebuck," or to his brother, who, in pink and a cap, and on a grey horse, officiated as huntsman) being laid on, or rather taken on, to the line just clear of the crowd, took up the scent very well, and with good music ran prettily through the Forest, which was generally very fair galloping, soft in parts but not very boggy, going in the direction of High Beech.

The running in the Forest lasted, I should think, about twenty-five minutes, and the scene was most amusing. There being no fences, every one of the 500 equestrians would ride boldly and fearlessly, undaunted by stubs, grips or from tumbling off, each one yelling or screaming as if his life depended on the noise he made, and uttering a cry constantly which puzzled me for some time, but afterwards saw its meaning, viz., "Up! up!! up!!!" addressed to their steeds, at each little grip or unevenness in the ground they came to. I kept about a medium place to enjoy the fun, and supposing they would keep in the Forest, both "Chancellor" and "Trap" pulling hard, and not a little excited by the noise, confusion, shouting of riders and galloping of steeds. But on coming to the edge of the Forest, I found that by good luck

the stag had taken to the enclosures, and the select few, going at a good pace, I had therefore to clap on to make up for my indolence, and gallantly little "Chancellor" responded to my call upon his powers.

But I could not help pausing to enjoy the scene at the first fence, most of their horses attempting to bring them over, the riders not being minded to come; others with their nag's forelegs and heads literally down in the ditch and their riders telling them in that position to "go on." However, I found that I need not wait, for at each fence was a repetition of the scene, and I had no time to lose. "Chancellor" whom I was riding in "Peep o' Day's" bridle, viz., a gag snaffle and curb which suited him nicely, went splendidly, shooting past the other horses and jumping all the fences (which were mostly blind, cramped, and awkward) beautifully and without the shadow of a mistake. I made him take his time at them, and no place proved too big or too wide for him. It was a fine line of grass meadow over Mr. Banbury's and Mr. Colvin's land, until we came up to the stag in Cobbins Brook, which "Chancellor" crossed and recrossed by creeping through very slowly.

Dislodged from here he took another excellent line over meadows, but the huntsman was not to be found, and therefore, at Colvin's suggestion, I got on with the leading couple of hounds, and had a capital gallop with stiffish fencing, and rather a nasty drop into a lane at which many got stuck up, until we got to Cobbins Brook again, at another point where I crossed and holloaing on the other hounds, and the huntsman at length appearing, but keeping on the right side of the brook, we ran on for a few fields further and took the stag underneath a small hedge close by Copped Hall Park. The run in the open must have been nearly if not quite an hour, and altogether was about one hour and a-half; the hour over the enclosures was really excellent, a good pace, nice riding turf and sufficient fences. In addition to this piece of good fortune, "Chancellor" delighted me, and I could not have been better or more safely carried by "Wide-awake;" "Carlow" would not have carried me so well, for he would have been too excited. Probably the little fellow not being in such high condition was all in his and my favour to-day; it reminded me of old times (five or six seasons ago) when, on this same little horse,* I would puzzle more than nine-tenths of the field.

* See picture, p. 315.

Altogether I enjoyed the day amazingly, saw the Cockneys and the scene, had a capital run (all the more prized from being beyond our expectation) and was delighted by an old favourite horse. I now regretted neither the loss of the drag with the Beagles, nor the omission of the foxhounds to come to Blackmore, and I was further pleased by finding that my selection of the hounds on Saturday had been fortunate, for I had avoided a blank day with Conyers. "Trap," who looks perfectly beautiful and was in tip-top condition, was very violent, rushed into the first fence, and Beckington could do nothing with him, but like an old stager still kept on the line and saw the finish. Even after allowing for all who crept up from knowledge of the country, or while the stag was being taken, there were only about thirty or forty out of the multitude who started. Giving the horses some chilled water at the "Cock" at Epping we trotted home, taking the bridle road* from Tyler's Green to Chipping Ongar, and thence to Stondon, and across the fields to Blackmore, which we reached at 6 o'clock, "Chancellor" very tired but game, and going well to the last, and "Trap" as fresh, rash, and hot, as when he started. So much for condition!

"CARLOW" DRAWS MR. VICKERMAN TO CHURCH ON HIS WEDDING DAY.

Friday, August 30th. An important day for good or ill in the career of every one, is the day of his marriage. Mine being fixed before poor John's† untimely fate, neither his poor widow nor mother considered it desirable to postpone it, as a year's postponement must have been involved. The day was bright, brilliant and beautiful, and the drive to Hornchurch in the brougham, drawn by my two favourites, "Carlow" and "Rocket," and with the chaise in attendance drawn by "Trap" and the filly and conveying Gale (the bridegroom's man) and Jack, was an enjoyable and auspicious commencement of the day.

Having on my return from my recent visit to Wales expressed regret that I had not sooner thought of getting "Carlow" fit to take me to church and convey my wife from it to our home, I was much pleased on entering the stable later in the day to find Beckington and Stone with shirt sleeves tucked up to the elbow and with poor old "Carlow" between

* Where is the bridle road now? Like a good many more, shut up, I am afraid.—ED.

† His brother, who was drowned, when attempting to cross with his chaise Egremont Ford, in the little river Cleddan, on August 5th.—ED.

them enveloped in lather and soapsuds. This was a novel mode of getting a horse clean and into condition by a summary process, but Beckington sharing in my feeling that the gallant old horse who had borne me so well and so often in the front rank should have the honour of conveying the bride home, determined to accomplish it if possible and succeeded, and very handsome he and "Rocket" looked together in a set of harness bought for the occasion.

Season 1850-51.

Saturday, November 2nd. The return of this season brings with it some feelings almost akin to regret in the reflection "What effect may my recent change of state have upon what has hitherto been my chief source of enjoyment and as I verily believe, the means of enabling a mind and temperament naturally unsuited to them, to bear up against the many cares and anxieties entailed by an anxious profession ever since the sudden death of my poor father left me a mere boy fresh from school to encounter the struggle of life." If the change should involve the abandonment or even a material curtailment of the only recreation which has ever enabled me to forget care for a time, will the affection of an amiable wife fully compensate for the deprivation? and will not the additional responsibilities consequent upon the change weigh yet more heavily upon the mind when it has lost the healthful vigour which in common with the body it has always hitherto derived from the pursuit of field sports and the greatest of pleasures? The future, however, can alone answer these enquiries, and therefore it is useless now to speculate upon them. One satisfaction is, however, present, whatever may be the result of the future, that unlike many of her sex, the regret of my dear wife would be added to my own if from any cause, especially one relating to herself, I were forced to forego a manly and invigorating recreation, which combines health, happiness and enjoyment.

Having heard that Mr. Conyers, "the old Squire," would have a bye-day at Myless, not beginning regular hunting until the 11th inst., I wended my way thither across the fields on old "Carlow," and after waiting for a couple of hours the Squire made his appearance, profuse in apologies, and with his nether members encased in woollen and surmounted with antigropelos. I was glad to see the old veteran in the saddle again, for one cannot fail to admire his pluck and determination, whatever may be one's opinion of other points of his

character. On returning home across Navestock Park I could not resist the temptation of a flight of rails which "Carlow" took in his usual style, and it was gratifying as well as creditable to hear the universal remark that the old horse looked fresher and better than ever.

Monday, November 11th, 1850. This, the first day of regular hunting with Mr. Conyers' hounds, was bright and brilliant and mild, and more like April than November, and pleasant for anything but the object for which a goodly field had mustered at Fyfield. The Forest Hall coverts were as usual drawn blank, and as usual the hurdles in the park afforded the only sport which this pretty place could properly show. Proceeding from Norwood to Wood End close to Butt Hatch, I put "Wide-awake" quickly at a standing jump with a wide ditch from me and a slight drop into the next field. Instead of doing it with care, as I anticipated, he jumped short and alighted singularly enough on his head against the opposite bank and side of the ditch, throwing a complete somersault on to his back with all four legs in the air. By great activity I rolled myself clear of him as he pitched on to his back, but even then was quite among his legs, and a great height his hind legs looked while up in the air. I surveyed them recumbent on my back and saw that they would descend upon me, probably striking me severely in his efforts to rise, when by another exertion I rolled myself clear of his hindquarters just before his legs descended and we both sprang to our feet together, the whole affair, though lengthy to describe, occupying some ten seconds.

I had just caught hold of "Wide-awake's" bridle, laughing at the disaster and my escape from a very awkward and unusually dangerous fall, when Beckington put "Peep o' Day" at the same place in order to join me. Unnerved, or else dismayed by the fall of his companion, he did not appear to make an effort to clear the ditch, but jumped clean into it, which was the more fortunate for his rider, who merely went over his head without any danger of his horse falling upon him; but I thought that I should never have ceased laughing at the droll disaster and on witnessing Beckington's unrivalled agility in scrambling up, for having seen my danger he put on the steam to get out of "Peep o' Day's" way, who was emerging from the ditch, and finding neither of the four animals damaged by their performance, there was no drawback to my merriment.

This comes of pottering about with horses fresh and foolish.

for though the place was tolerably big, yet in the height of the season both these horses would have thought nothing of it; these slow falls are always the worst and most dangerous, for having no impetus one is sure to tumble all among the horse with all the chance of his rolling over, or at least severely striking or treading on one when rising.

This season must be surely unmatched in England, or in Essex, at least, for drought. Spring, summer and autumn have all been unusually dry, and now in November, when we calculated upon a daily wet jacket to compensate for former dryness, the drought still continues, and judging from appearances there seems but little prospect of a change for a fortnight at least. Among the strangers to-day was Lord Vivian (who is on a visit to Brice Pearse at Gilston), on a powerful old bay horse of a good stamp and able to carry his master's great weight and long legs. He is evidently a rider and a sportsman, and I regretted that he had not a better opportunity of exhibiting these qualities.

Saturday, November 16th. Matching Green was the fixture. Among the field was Lord Petre, just succeeded to the title by the death of his father last summer, tall, thin, and of an aristocratic appearance, courteous and affable in manner; he was riding a long, raking looking brown horse of no great substance, but looking like going, as did his rider. Sir Charles Smith was also out on his fidgetty little chestnut: he was disposed to be very complaisant, expressing regret at my being about to leave the country, &c. Mr. Conyers has advertised his meets this week for the first time in his long career and intends doing so for the future, for which he assigns his reasons (1) That after the great kindness of the county evinced in his testimonial he thinks it right to afford them every opportunity of enjoying sport, and (2) which, he adds, will be by many considered his chief reason that Mrs. Conyers positively refuses to write any more circular letters, and that he cannot write. This will be a saving of many *twopences*, for one of his peculiarities was that he never paid the postage of the letters to his subscribers.

Tuesday, November 19th. Staghounds at Boynton Hall. A name of promise, and the hour the luxurious one of half-past eleven. I rode "Wide-awake" thither, who was fresh and gay and in blooming condition, wanting only work, and overtook Frederick Petre with the hounds (twelve couple) at the "Hare and Hounds," Roxwell; and his brother, Lord Petre, drove up in his light cart just before we reached the

fixture. The Christys had provided a luncheon at Boynton Hall, and a small field mustered, including Lord Petre, F. Petre, Sir C. Smith, Parker, Soames, three Reeves, two Barkers, Stallibrass—about twenty-four altogether. Mr. F. Petre hunted the hounds, riding his old black mare of last season, but apparently on no better terms than he then was, for he did not get on comfortably and hadn't sufficient stomach for his fences. Lord Petre, mounted on the same lengthy black horse he rode on Saturday, and which he told me he had steeplechased, justified my anticipation of him as a rider, his horse fencing beautifully, and appearing as much at home with the banks and ditches as if he had been entered in Essex. Sam Reeve rode an Irish horse (just bought by his Lordship) so like the old chestnut that I did not at first perceive the difference, and rode him very well. Soames, on a well-bred and good shaped black horse, which has carried him four seasons in the Vale of Aylesbury, also rode very well. Coming to a check of some duration caused Lord Petre to exclaim—"Where is the Squire?" and then directly amending the phrase "Where is the Master?" But neither Squire nor Master responding he proceeded like a sportsman to assist the whip in turning the hounds, and by the time they were put right the Master appeared minus his horn, which had dropped, he supposed, as his mare blundered at a fence. By Old Park, Felstead Park, Lees Priory taking the hind "Lucy Long," near Felstead Common.

Saturday, November 30th. Not a little creditable is it to Essex as a hunting county, nor to Blackmore as a centre in it, to record that this morning I had the chance of hunting with any one of six packs of hounds, viz.: four of foxhounds, one of staghounds, and one of beagles. Conyers was at High Roothing Street, The Essex Union at Stock, the East Essex at St. Anne's Castle, and the South Essex at North Ockendon. The staghounds were at Writtle Racecourse, and the Blackmore Beagles at Roxwell, all within reach, the farthest from here being St. Anne's Castle, about fifteen miles, where I occasionally go and have already been during the present season.

Saturday, December 7th. The fixture Fyfield. There was a goodly muster, and it included the old Squire in great force, in a pair of stirrups padded entirely with leather, copied from the Duke of Wellington, whom he described as still riding in the hunting field with great ardour and determination, and cracking his joke that "though he was not in the Duke's shoes he was next best, being in his stirrups."

In a run with the staghounds from Pleshey on Tuesday, December 12th, the hind "Lucy Long"—a run in which every one had the opportunity of sharing at some time or other, though Captain Pilgrim was invisible from first to last. Captain Duff having his liver in good order rode his chestnut rather wildly on to hounds at the beginning when they went slowly, and was rated good-naturedly, but showed more pluck than I had yet seen him display. Williamson having changed Follet's brute for a better one, made up for his misfortunes on Monday. Young Wake from Northamptonshire (son of Sir C. Wake) rode that good brown horse of Cassidy's, which carried Du Cane last season, very pluckily and certainly, as I told him, took his twenty-five shillings' worth out of him and got a fall at the finish. Harvey Tower, far too heavy for his little brown mare, had three or four falls. F. Petre was on his brown horse, and Parker on his grey again, but neither was very ferocious to-day. Soames again on his old black, with fourteen miles to return; Sparrow on a fine stamp of weight carrier, and Button on a good-shaped though spare bay horse, having come this morning twenty-six miles from Mucking and returning to Billericay. (For the run with the stag "Chief Justice," so named in compliment to Mr. Denman, who was out on February 11th, 1851, from Leaden Roothing to Hockerill within an hour, you must read Mr. Vickerman's diary.)

Saturday, February 15. In a run with an Old Park fox on this day, Mr. Vickerman, who was riding "Wide-awake," found himself in a very uncomfortable position, and then describes how his horse, after rolling on his side, fell into the deep ditch, half full of water, nearly taking Mr. V. with him, squatting on his hams, which deposited him fairly on his back, with all his legs upwards, and drawn towards each other like a dog when begging on his back.

Mr. Vickerman goes on to say:—Giving the reins to Ridley while I scrambled back over the fence and then taking them again myself, I got him to apply at the nearest farm for help. Only two others besides myself had taken this line and they had gone on; and there I stood by myself, looking at poor "Wide-awake's" helpless and uncomfortable situation, thinking of the fate of poor "Little John," and reflecting that I had never before got a horse into a ditch during the eight seasons I have hunted in Essex, and contrasting the sudden change of my present quiet and isolated position with the strong excitement of a few minutes previously, when sweeping

over the country close to twenty couple of slapping foxhounds with more than one hundred horsemen behind me.

Saturday, February 22nd. After the old Squire had amused us by a few personalities while waiting by Envilles, and had performed the unwonted civility of sending to Lord Petre to enquire where he would like to draw, and had addressed Cassidy, who had ventured to sport a cap, "You look so d——d smart in that cap, I didn't know you!" we went to Brick Kilns, and thence to Barnish, from which covert a rare good run took place by Abbess, White Roothing, Leaden and Aythrop to High Roothing, Bury, killing at Poplars. John Stallibrass went well at first, but pumped his horse, got a fall, and could not keep with them. Sworder, on his good little mare, went well, and so did young Honeywood, and the two Mashiters were well placed; Lord Petre also was well up, and seemed to enjoy it, while he told me I was very happy.

Fyfield, the first fixture for staghounds, March 8th, 1851. The dry weather and distance of foxhounds at Takeley caused the largest field to assemble I have yet seen with the staghounds. Lady Petre was in her carriage to witness the uncarting of the quarry, "The Miller's Maid." As soon as hounds were laid on it was apparent that there was a capital scent, for they literally raced over the first few fields across the lane leading to Fyfield, down to the Farm House, where some rushes laid in a ditch made an awkward place, by declining which, in the first instance, though I had to have it afterwards, the hounds got three fields ahead, but seeing them incline to the left I sailed away down the meadows and soon came up with them. Then down to the river not far from Shelly, over the bridge leading into the Forest Hall meadows, in front of the house, just avoiding the invisible fence, and over the hurdles, avoiding John Stane, who was afoot, with some difficulty; then into the Ongar Road, which I quitted directly by taking a fence under a tree, when Du Cane, who was just behind me on his roan, told me to put down my head, and in following lost his own hat, but the pace was too good to stop, and he pluckily rode to the finish bareheaded.

Crossing these meadows in and out of the road and round a barn, and by Paslow Hall meadows, to Allford Bridge, over Myless Park, entering by the Lodge, and going to the bridge; but then bearing to the right and over the enclosures and a little road work to Navestock Green, and into the enclosure on the left, with some stiff fencing, up to Ditchleys, by Wright's Bridge to Bedford's, and over Tom Mashiter's farm, to

Marshall's and the back of the outskirts of Romford, close to Hill House; here in a garden or nursery ground, by the wall of Marshall's, we ran up, and the hind, who looked tired—as well she might—for she had brought us so far in one and a-quarter hours, the first three quarters of an hour at literally racing pace—and all hoped she might be taken, as she would have been but for an unlucky cast.

A select number had got so far and few of them went on. Lord Petre, who had gone well, but made too free use of his brown horse, got two falls, and no further than Navestock. A Mr. Arkwright on a clever horse, stopped at Romford. But short rest was given to those who intended to see the finish, for the hind seemed fresh again, and went away at the back of Marshall's, disdaining roads, over a good line of country, straight for Hainault Forest, through about half of the forest, and then out again to the left. Here I lost distance from carelessness and feared I should not see hounds again, trusting unwisely to the confident assertions of the Christys and William Mashiter; but after going over much more ground than the hounds, we fortunately espied them just quitting the forest and sailing over the enclosures as if they had only just started.

The boggy ground prevented our joining them as quickly as we would wish, and a fresh impediment was presented in a churl who stopped my companions. I was pushing through a side-gate when he rushed after me and seized my bridle; remonstrance proving unavailing, I rose in my stirrups and gave his knuckles a benefit which speedily relaxed his hold, jumped the fence amidst his blessings, and after a switching gallop over light and favourable ground and banking fences, caught the hounds running over a fair line of country by Ilford; crossed the railway by a bridge, and continued on to Barking, which the hind disdained to enter, and set her head for the marshes, where we anticipated a benefit with tired horses among the ditches; but after jumping a stiff post and rails and ditch gallantly, she headed short back again, and was secured at the back of some houses and literally within one hundred yards of a "ship" lying in the creek. She was taken two and a-half hours after the hounds were laid on, the distance by the nearest road must be about twenty-two miles. Tom Mashiter's horse nearly died on reaching home, and was only saved by administering to him a bottle of port.

Saturday, April 5th. All the other packs in Essex having ceased regular hunting, Marriott, as usual, stayed on a week later than the rest, and met at St. Anne's Castle. A field of

between two and three hundred mustered, and it seemed as if all the hunting portion of Essex were assembled, and some from Hertfordshire too; one met almost everybody one had been accustomed to meet during the season. There were four Masters of hounds out, and I saw men who had come nearly thirty miles from opposite points, making a diameter of fifty or sixty miles to the circle, thus drawn to a centre by a meet of foxhounds, &c.

As we returned through the High Woods we heard Conyer's hounds, which met to-day at Blackmore, for a bye-day, running a fox at nearly 7 o'clock, and were told by the two Fanes, who overtook us, that they had been running their fox for four hours, and could neither kill him or get him away.

Saturday, April 12th. (With the Puckeridge at Elmdon Lee, Mr. Vickerman brought his hunting to a close, and says): —Thus ends the seasons 1850-1851, the most open and generally favourable, in point of weather, that I can call to mind, the first of my married life and the last, in all probability in Essex—at least, the last in which I shall hunt from my own residence in Essex. Whatever influence the married state may have upon future seasons and hunting in general, it has opened auspiciously for I have had by far the best sport, with the fewest falls, disasters, soakings or other discomforts, greater or less, than I can ever recollect, &c.

BROOK JUMPING.

Saturday, April 26th, 1851. In honour of Jack* having attained the mature age of 18 years, he had a holiday of two or three days, having his friends and mine and formerly pupils at S. S. Newman, Gale and Rouse, to stay with him at Blackmore. Willie was also at home for his Easter holidays.

While I was breakfasting this morning they all came over to me and insisted that I should join them in some fun, as they were going to have a steeplechase, and I told them that I would come to look on and see fair play, when I had breakfasted, and agreed as to the place where the Hurdles should be fixed in the meadow called Blacklands, leading to the brook dividing it from the meadow called "Farther Partridge Hills."

On joining them I found that Jack had selected a very good line. Being only able to muster 10 hurdles he had made 5 "flights" of them at about 45 or 50 yards apart; the last or 5th flight being about 50 yards from the brook, with the starting post about 20 yards from the first flight, and the winning post 60 or 70 yards on the other side of the brook in Far Partridge Hills. From the starting post to the brook the meadow declined in a gentle descent with an advantage in the height of the ground on the take-off at the brook, and then after a level bit of land on the other side of the brook, the ground rose rather sharply to the winning post.

* John Vickerman Longbourne, Mr. Vickerman's nephew.—Ed.

I found that the steeplechasers were to be only 3, Rouse being no jumper and too fleshy for running, having been elected Judge and Umpire. The other two visitors, Newman and Gale, like Jocks of the present day at an "ugly fence," were protesting loudly against the brook, declaring that it was not jumpable and that they would get a ducking. Jack, on the other hand, having with myself, often tested his capabilities, and with his usual pluck was all in favour of the brook and certainly vociferated as loudly, in the inharmonious tones of a hobbledehoy, in its praise as the other two in its dispraise. It certainly looked, as it was, a jump which must be cleared, for the banks were nearly perpendicular, with a few low bushes on both sides; there was about 3 or 4 feet of water owing to the recent showers and the take off about 4 feet above the water, while the landing averaged about 3 feet above it, a round bush much higher than the rest forming the right hand boundary of the course at the brook. To the left of the bush it required a jump of 12 feet to clear the brook, but the take off was very good, and the landing was low, sloping and favourable. To the right of the bush on the other hand the brook could not be cleared under 14 feet because the take off was further from the edge, the earth had been marked away at the landing which was higher as well as wider, with some bushes also which would cause a fall, if not cleared. In addition to this, as the hurdles were placed, those who went to the right of the brook had to run quite out of the course to the right, and then after clearing the brook run in again to the left. I proposed, therefore, and Jack, after a little good natured grumbling about "unfair advantage," &c., agreed, that as Gale and Newman were guests and funked the brook, they should have it all to themselves on the left of the bush, where it was easy and straight and that as Rouse would not run, and in order to make up the four so that each might have his own half hurdle to himself, I would enter myself, though being full of coffee, &c., while they had all breakfasted more than an hour ago, and old and stiff after a season's hard riding, while they were all young, active and crack cricketers, just in condition to begin their season, I should have no chance but would enact "Boots" for the fun of the thing, and that Jack and I should be compelled to take the brook to the right of the bush with all the disadvantages of so doing.

Even this did not satisfy the visitors, nor would Gale be persuaded that he could reach the opposite side of the brook without becoming a "moist Gale," until he had essayed and succeeded, though at the expense of a slight rick of his ankle, which admonished him that he should exchange his low shoes for ankle boots, as worn by the rest of us. While he went to the village accompanied by Rouse to make the change, Newman, Jack and I amused ourselves with the gloves and single-sticks. It was a lovely morning, sunny, with the appearance of showers and the ground moist and in good order for jumping.

Gale and Rouse having returned and amused us with a set to with the gloves, in which the former displayed much activity, and the latter some science from the professors under whom he had studied, the conditions of the races were stated and agreed upon.

Gale was on the left, with Newman on his right, and then myself and then Jack on the extreme right. It was to be a race in heats. Each was to keep to his own half hurdle and place at the brook, and fouling or jostling strictly prohibited. The racers divested themselves of hats, coats, waistcoats, neckcloths and braces, their "breeks" being supported by handkerchiefs tied round the loins. Rouse as judge and umpire, took his station at the winning post on the other side of the brook, supported by Willie, and the racers ranged themselves in line at the starting post 20

yards from the first hurdles; the signal to start being the dropping of the judge's white handkerchief after previously ascertaining that we were all ready.

"Betting" was not particularly brisk on the course, though in my opinion at least, Jack was favourite at even against the field, or perhaps with a point or two in his favour, say 4 to 3 on him; Gale 2 to 1 against, Newman 3 to 1 against; while "old Carlo"* was certainly at 4 to 1 against him even if named at all in the betting.

Jack's powers and confidence at the brook, even though he and "Carlo" had to take it at the worst place and go out of their course both before and after it, made him first favourite, added to which he is already taller than "Carlo," half a stone lighter without any lumber, in fact lithe, gaunt, and accustomed to this style of fencing, all through the past winter. Gale on the other hand, with his active and powerful build and broad hips, and Newman as long, spare and active as a greyhound, and both in good order and longing for the cricket-fields, as well as from former feats of activity, justified the confidence of their backers and would have commanded a higher figure had they not shown a little nervousness and indisposition to face the water. As for "old Carlo" it had transpired that his trainer not expecting him to start had actually given him his corn and beans as usual, and as he had been nominated only in the place of an animal that had been scratched and had manifested decided symptoms of stiffness in his preparatory canter, it was not to be expected that he would find many supporters.

At the given signal an excellent start was effected, all the horses getting well away in a line, and the judge declaring that they all jumped the five flights of hurdles abreast except perhaps the last flight which Jack cleared slightly in advance. But then occurred a very different scene and order of things. Jack was first over the brook and past the chair, but had crossed "Carlo," though unintentionally, on reaching the brook, whose Jock had taken a pull to steady him at the brook, and thus actually shut him out and prevented him from going at it until he had got over; but still old "Carlo," to the surprise of the field and delight of his Jock, was second, and these were the only horses placed, for though both Gale and Newman charged the brook gallantly and got safe over, the former had fallen on landing and the latter stumbled over him, and then both walked in having no chance, but as they had cleared the brook the Judge declared that they were not "distanced."

The judge was saved the necessity of deciding between Jack and "Carlo" by the owner of the latter declaring that being convinced the fouling was unintentional, he would not press the objection. In truth he was in such good humour that a "Blackmore nag," viz., Jack, had kept up the honour of the parish and the county, and that his own old horse "Carlo," another county nag, had run second instead of being distanced, and would probably run better in the next heat, that he was willing to agree to anything.

The requisite time having been allowed, viz., about ten minutes, the horses again assembled at the starting-post, each feeling greater confidence than on the former occasion, as all now felt that the course was practicable throughout.

The result of the first heat had somewhat altered the betting. Jack was even against the Field. Gale, from having fallen at the brook had receded to the third place, and Newman, whose mistake at the brook

* "Carlow." (Mr. C. R. Vickerman).—ED.

had been caused by Gale's disaster, had advanced to second place, and even the owner of the Favourite thought he looked dangerous, while old "Carlo" was still "Boots," it being considered that but for the mistakes at the brook of the second and third horses the old fellow could not have beaten them.

Another reason which brought the third and fourth horses into favour notwithstanding their mishap was that by general consent and on the proposition of "Carlo's" owner, though it might tell against his horse, the winning post was removed much further up the slope and from the brook, so that any horse stumbling or dwelling at the brook might have more time to recover himself and perhaps then be a winner.

In this state of things, and in the presence, as in the first heat, of some fair young spectators from the adjoining Priory (which however is not a "nunnery" as might otherwise be supposed), the flag was dropped for the second time, and again an excellent start was effected, the first flight of hurdles being cleared by all the horses abreast. But "Carlo's" Jock having perceived his error in the first heat, in not having placed sufficient confidence in the old horse's powers, and feeling also that the old fellow had disposed of some of his beans, and so that his wind might now be trusted, here forced the running and led over the remaining four flights of hurdles and brought his horse first to the brook, so that he could not be shut out as in the first heat. The Favourite, however, fearing for his laurels, made play at a tremendous pace, so that "Carlo" could scarcely get a length ahead of him. It was a good race between Newman and Gale up to the brook, though they contended only for the honour of third place and to avoid being Boots, but Gale refused the brook and was then both Boots and distanced. "Carlo" cleared the brook in the old horse's usual style, a little in advance of Jack; the advantage was increased by the latter stumbling on landing, but he recovered himself so quickly and tried so hard to win the race by winning this heat that it was not without a severe struggle that "Carlo" went in a winner by a couple of lengths with Jack second and Newman an indifferent third. Gale was "distanced;" as already stated, his Jock said his horse had broken down and he did not like to risk him at the brook, though competent judges thought otherwise, and that it was a case of funk, and their opinion was confirmed by the fact that in larking homewards, in which the Judge was induced to join and surprised himself as much as he astonished his friends by his unexpected prowess across country, and especially in riding over the course (with the exception of the brook), Gale proved himself to be a better fencer than some of the horses who had beaten him, and quite as sound.

Newman was drawn by his owner after the second heat, and it being thus left only to the two Blackmore nags, their owners wisely divided the stakes, contenting themselves with having preserved the honour of their county, though perhaps not showing so much wisdom in other respects, for the owner of the favourite was as unreasonably dejected as "Carlo's" owner was elated at the unexpected issue of the steeple-chase, especially of the second heat, where there was no fouling. However a quiet whisper from "Carlo's" owner in the ear of his late opponent soon put all right, and the larking over the Priory meadows dispelled every other feeling than those of unalloyed pleasure, and certainly made the old fellow feel how delightful it was to become a boy again if only for an hour or two.

A pardonable vanity, perhaps, or rather a pleasurable feeling that the cares and anxieties of business have not as yet (though I frequently fear

they have) destroyed all the activity I formerly possessed, though with but limited opportunities of cultivating it, and that I may perhaps look back in after years upon a trifling incident like the present with interest, when the actors are all older, if haply in existence, has induced me to record such "nonsense" (as many would term it), and in a yet more nonsensical style (as the same critics would declare). But there is little chance of any eyes caring to peruse such trifles except my own or those of a few who might forgive the nonsense* for the sake of the scribbler, that I have ventured to give it a place in these notes. The same weakness induces me to record that, equally to my surprise last summer, after a cricket match, I beat these same competitors, with the addition of Wm. Moss, in a flat race of 100 yards.

Park Wood, Doddinghurst

* There cannot be much nonsense about so graphic and accurate a description even of an event as simple as the one described. Anyone taking the trouble to read it can picture the whole scene as clearly as if he had been an onlooker on that merry morning.—ED.

CHAPTER XIV.

Season 1851-52—Hunting in Surrey—A Dry Season—Surrey Fences—Season 1852-53—The Red Lion, Dulverton—Stag Hunting on Exmoor—Mr. Carew—Dr. Collyns—The Castle Hotel, Lynton—The Surrey Stag Hounds—Arthur Heathcote, M.S.H.—A Hunt Breakfast at the Durdans—Essex Stag Hounds—Petres Four—Russian Deer—The Bishop of Waltham—Season 1853-54—War, Pestilence and Famine—A Gloomy Outlook—Mr. Henley Greaves, M.F.H.—Messrs. Tattersall—A bad Purchase—Blank Days—Warnings off—The Surrey Deer "Snowstorm"—Season 1854-55—Changing Residences—Bagging a Subscriber—"The Clipper" gets away—Catch him yourself, then!—The Spotted Hind—Sir Charles Smith to the front—Thomas Mashiter—Old Superstitions—Unlucky Questions—William Honeywood's Harriers—Boreham House—Mr. Vickerman's Summary of Season 1856-57—A Good Run in 1858—James Stallibrass means Mischief—Season 1858-59—Donate's Comet—The Great Drought—Dangerous Going.

Season 1851-52.

FOUND Mr. Vickerman hunting in Surrey and the accounts of his sport in that country are as fully described and interesting as those of his days in Essex when he managed to steal a day now and then. "Cognac's" name crops up again in the Journal entry of March 13th:—On the following Monday, I called on Lord Milford at the "St. George's Hotel," Albemarle Street, when to my great surprise his lordship told me that he was daily in the habit of seeing a horse of mine, a fine looking chestnut, called "Cognac," that it belonged to his doctor, Mr. Hicks, who drove it, and who nerved the horse to cure lameness. His lordship went on to say that he had heard a great deal about the horse and about my love for hunting, which he thought the best thing possible for any one condemned to a sedentary harassing profession, that he himself used to be very fond of hunting, and had flattered himself could also ride a little.

I had often wondered what had become of "Cognac," and had not expected to hear of him from such a quarter, and I was puzzled to know how Lord Milford could have learned so much of the horse's performance while he was mine, until he told me that Wilkinson and Kidd were his saddlers, as they were mine, and no doubt George Kidd, who was always interested in the horse, had enlightened his lordship about him.

On the same day I met James Parker, who told me that the staghounds had given up hunting in Essex, owing to the hard and dry state of the ground.

Mr. Vickerman sums up the season in the following words:—The leading characteristic of the past season has undoubtedly been its singular dryness, which has kept the

Charles Ranken Vickerman

ground hard, rendered the scent indifferent and generally made it as bad a season for sport in every country, and with every pack as the previous season was favourable. Colonel Wyndham (of Melton), told me that Sir Richard Sutton had declared to him it was the very worst season he had experienced since he kept hounds, and the notices from correspondents, articles, letters, &c., in the *Sporting Magazine* and *Bell's Life*, with

the concurrent testimony of hunting acquaintances from various quarters, all prove that Sir Richard was not singular in this respect, for the want of sport has been universal.

Nor could it be otherwise. The summer was the Exhibition Summer, long, hot and dry, the autumn dry also. November, instead of being dry and sloppy, was like a bitter March, dry, hard and severe frosts, and it was the 20th of December before we had any rain to moisten and soften the ground. January and the early part of February, were wet, with boisterous gales, and sport was generally fair during this interval, but from the middle of February to the middle of April (the period of my now writing), we have not had a drop of rain except on Monday night, March 29th. The wind during these two months has been north-east, the days generally clear and sunny, and the nights most frequently sharp frosts, until the country is not simply dry but pulverised.

During such a season and in so bad a country for scent as well as every other hunting requisite as Surrey, it has been a piece of good fortune to have the opportunity of hunting with staghounds, as well kept and managed as the Surrey staghounds, by their young easy-tempered master, Arthur Heathcote. With them we have had many a gallop which we should never have witnessed with foxhounds, and in vale countries far better (cramped though they be) than the latter can ever venture into, being generally condemned to pursue their game where it is chiefly to be found amid the hills and flints.

Like many and indeed most things which we undertake involuntarily and contrary to inclination, my first season of Surrey hunting has not proved so much of a blank and disappointment as I had feared and anticipated. Thanks to the staghounds we have chiefly been in the Vale "below hill" where there is less of hill, very little if any flint, and where enclosures are small and fences generally stiff and cramped. Hence with a tolerable deer and fair scent, there has generally been plenty to do, and though it has not certainly been at all equal to the pleasure of sailing over the broad expanse of "The Roothings," with their flying fences and independence of action and extent of vision, added to the great negative advantage of absence of roads, lanes, rivers, canals, and railways, which mar so materially many a good run in Surrey and other counties, still there has been abundance of work and impediments to try both horse and rider, and perhaps to improve the cleverness and skill of both by the extreme dissimilarity and variety of fences, and the hilly cramped

country, thick hedgerows and numerous coverts compelling every one who wishes to see the hounds, not to be very far from them.

In Surrey one gets hill and vale, commons and enclosures, and heaths and downs, grass and plough. Timber, in the shape of pretty stiff gates, stiles and rails, hedges and brooks. There are but few banks, and the ditches generally are small, but with the exception of walls, you meet with every kind of fence and country one is likely to encounter anywhere else. In Essex, on the contrary, the fences are all so similar in style, and there is so entire an absence of hills,* that though highly agreeable to ride over, when your horse is accustomed to the narrow bank and wide ditch, one is apt to feel awkward in visiting another country, where the fences look high and the hills steep; but this disadvantage is to my thinking amply compensated for by the pleasure I enjoyed for so many seasons of a gallop over "The Roothings," and of living within easy reach of them.

Season 1852-53.

The present season has commenced earlier than usual in consequence of my having carried out an intention of some standing to witness the hunting of the wild red deer, before they should become exterminated. Combining with this intention an equestrian tour in North Devon with my wife, I hired a couple of very good horses of Messrs. Carter and Lovenbury, of Bath, paying £50 for the two for a fortnight, and took them with me by railway to Taunton, on Wednesday, September 15th, 1852, whence we commenced our ride on a rainy day, proceeding through Milverton and reaching Wiveliscombe in the evening.

The following day we rode to Dulverton, and quartered ourselves at the "Red Lion" in the latter place. Our luggage was conveyed by coach from Taunton to Lynton, we reserving just as much as filled some capacious saddle-bags lent to me by Beckington, and it was surprising how much they contained with good packing; they are, however, very uncomfortable to ride with both for rider and horse, and it would be an improvement in an equestrian expedition, to have small portmanteaus like those carried by the Post Office lads, with pads and cruppers, which would rest on the horse's quarters clear of the saddle, and would go equally well with a side-saddle.

* Mr. Vickerman evidently did not hunt much in the Nasing and Galley hill country, which is undulating enough to try the merits of most horses.—Ed.

The horse I rode was a very fine shaped bay sixteen hands high, with fair coat and in good hunting condition, he looked shaky on his fore legs and wore boots, but was in truth very safe and a capital hack. He had a singular tumour or swelling in the inside of the near thigh, caused by being staked on Exmoor. The mare, which my wife rode, was a very good stamp, brown, 15½ hands high, and very compact and strongly built, a good and safe hack, very quiet and steady on the road, and a good hunter, though not in condition, having apparently been recently taken up; she improved greatly as did the horse during the fortnight they were in our service. I liked both well enough to obtain their prices, viz., horse £28, mare £42, but their ages and other circumstances prevented my being taken by either.

Friday, September 17th. A lovely morning, though not exactly adapted for hunting. The fixture was Berry Hill, only two miles from Dulverton, the ride to it (and through the wood while the Tuft hounds were slotting their deer in the wooded valley below us) was lovely, and recalled to our recollection scenes in Switzerland, as Dulverton itself struck us as somewhat resembling some of the Swiss villages.

We took our station along with many veterans versed in the geography of the locality, at a commanding spot overlooking the further woods of Lord Carnarvon by the summer house where the Tufters were drawing, and were assured that nine times out of ten the stag broke in our direction and we should probably have a good view. However, it was unluckily not to be, and being thoroughly chilled with waiting an hour in an exposed spot, it was arranged that my wife should return in charge of her doughty squire, while I rode to join the hounds. I had only just reached the bottom when a man rode up with orders for the whip to bring on the pack, which had been shut up in a farm house, a stag of the right age having been found and moved.

On joining the field, who were decked out in pink and complete hunting attire, my horse, the bay, was immediately recognised by Mr. Fred Daniel as having been his property only a twelvemonth ago, and it was satisfactory that he was a good and safe hack and used to this wild country; I also recognised Edward Karslake, who greeted me cordially and introduced me to several of the leading men of the hunt. The pack, when laid on, rather overshot their mark and got on to the track of some hind which had gone away, but were presently put on the right track and immediately our eyes were gratified

by the appearance of a noble stag, said to be five or six years old, with full antlers, bounding along the side of the opposite slope and getting through the underwood with surprising facility.

How different are the feelings in viewing this wild denizen of moor and ravine careering over his native wild in the full enjoyment of perfect freedom and liberty, in all the glory of his unshorn antlers, to those with which we regard the half domesticated animal turned out of the deer-cart and gazing around in undecided bewilderment before he determines upon his course. The wild red-deer, like a fox, knows the country and therefore makes his point, and sometimes without regard to wind or impediments. Thus our stag, whom the natives declared looked a galloper and proved the truth of their anticipations, after displaying himself to perfection over the cleared ground on the opposite side of the ravine, crossed the ravine, ascended the slope and crossed the road in front of the whole field and within a few yards of me and went away over a heathery hill, called Beacon Hill, from the summit of which a glorious prospect is spread before you.

The riding here was singular to a stranger, the heather was quite as high and frequently higher than the horses' knees and so thick as effectually to conceal stones, cart ruts and rabbit holes, and yet we all rode right across it as hard as we could gallop, making the horses look fine from their high action, while the perspiration streamed from my brow from the severe and unusual exercise. Luckily there were very few, if any, rabbit holes, and so it was not so bad as it looked. There were very few fences, but very queer places to ride up and down, requiring the small and cat-like animals of the country to do them cleverly. The hounds were fast but not very level, owing to the old pack having been broken up. These are kept by Mr. Carew, the Master of the Tiverton Hounds, a good-natured, well fed and happy, and easy looking and going individual, who like most Masters of hounds, seems an enthusiast on hunting without being a hard rider. The Huntsman is a surprising instance in favour of hunting as an inducement to health, activity and longevity. He is 75 years old and yet rides down these breakneck places and over this very wild, rough and stony country, and though never, even when young, much of a rider, yet has always managed to fulfil his prediction of himself that "He would be with his hounds whenever they wanted him."

We ran our stag for nearly six hours and finally had to give

him up, the hounds being beaten and the light failing us at a spot about a mile below the suspension bridge over the Exe. In crossing the river at this spot I got into a boggy bit; the bay horse was frightened and plunged violently, but I kept hold of his head and though it was a case of up and down for some time in the river, I finally rode him out at the opposite side with the loss of a fore shoe, which took me upwards of an hour to get replaced, the smith having to make one, which then did not fit, and afterwards having to make another, and it was 8 o'clock before I reached Dulverton. A wretched dinner was provided by Gillard, our host of the "Red Lion," some fish dry enough to choke one and a joint that it would have puzzled a shark to get his teeth into, and pear pie—a sorry production. The bitter beer was good and it being so cold and their tea so execrable, I took a second glass of beer instead of tea; I am thus particular in recording my fare because I know not whether it was the insufficient food, or the strong exercise too fatiguing for my weak state of health, or the relaxing effects of the Dulverton air and the close foul quarters at the "Red Lion," or all combined, that produced next day the most prolonged, troublesome and reducing gastric attack I have ever been affected with, lasting for three or four weeks, wasting away flesh and muscle and reducing my weight by nearly a stone and requiring medical aid both at Lynton and Saundersfoot.

Saturday, September 18th. A soaking morning, showing me what rain is in the west. The Harriers were to meet at Combe, a nice old manor house a mile from Dulverton, recently taken by Mr. Locke, who has lived chiefly in Greece. The house, well furnished with stables, gardens, eight acres of meadows and orchard, a private drive of a mile to the neighbouring church and shooting over 1,500 acres around the house, is let for only £70 a year, the landlord paying all rates, taxes, tithes and other outgoings. Mr. Poole (or Raule?) the Master of the Harriers, lives opposite the "Red Lion," and walked about uneasily during the rain in hydrophalous garments, surmounted by a hunting cap; a big burly style of man, looking like Neptune about to go hunting. At last, his patience being exhausted before the clouds, he started with his team, a varminty looking lot, attended by his whip in the shape of a gaunt old fellow on foot in shady fustian habiliments and leather leggings with couples depending from his near side. We received calls from Edward Karslake and the great sporting authority of that neighbourhood, Dr. Collyns, a little elderly rotund figure, then

in professional sable, but who yesterday was in brown cords with such a pair of tops as Noah might have worn in the Ark and had not been fairly well-used since. I then went to see Karslake's house and was introduced to his brother John, also a barrister, and both of Devonshire extraction, and liked their quarters, at the "White Hart," much better than ours at the "Red Lion."

On Saturday afternoon we rode to and slept at Exford, a wild and picturesque village on Exmoor and on Monday had a very rough, wet and stormy ride over Exmoor, by Brendon to the comfortable quarters of the "Castle" Hotel at Lynton, kept by Thomas Baker, where we stayed a week, riding each day in the picturesque neighbourhood, which we much enjoyed, and having another day with the stag from Yard Down, after Barnstaple Fair. The stag was not turned down as is customary on this occasion, but was found." (*Here follows account of day.*)

Mr. Vickerman still continued to hunt with the Surrey Staghounds whose opening meet he thus describes :—

Tuesday, October 19th, 1852. This was the first day's regular hunting and a breakfast was given by our young Master, Arthur Heathcote, at his delightful residence for a sportsman, "The Durdans;" my neighbour and tenant, Roger Eykyn, drove me thither, he finding the horse and I the cart. Eykyn hunted last season with the foxhounds, but I persuaded him to join the staghounds and we rode over in August to see the kennels and gladdened the Master's heart by paying our subscription in advance. The breakfast was a very good one, great plenty and excellent style, and the affair went off well, including a subscription for Huntsman and whip for last season and the present. The presence of the ladies and the red coats in the dining room quite made the fine old house look alive, while the park-like scene and fine timber, the continuous range of stables, riding-school and kennels, and the well-timbered paddock, leading to the saddling paddock, which opens on to the racecourse and where they now run in, formed altogether a very enviable abode. Yet Mr. Heathcote, apparently not more than 23, lives here as a bachelor, seems to see very little society and is so diffident that it required all the persuasion of Simpson and Shaw to induce him to give the breakfast, which helps to keep up an enthusiasm without which hunting flags and all the expenses fall on the Master. (*Here follows the run of one hour and forty minutes with the "Horley Hind."*)

(No less than four of the Petres were out on a day Mr. Vickerman put in with his old favourites, the Essex Staghounds, at Willingale, on November 24th. The Master, Mr. F. Petre, on his chestnut mare; his lordship on his black steeplechaser; their uncle, Capt. Fredk. Petre, from Leicestershire, riding a grey horse of his lordship's, and Mr. Arthur Petre, a heavy weight and younger brother of the Master; and a good day it was, too, and fully described in three or four pages of Mr. Vickerman's neat closely-written diary—as also the run with the stag on Monday, December 27th, from Fyfield, with one of the fine white large breed, half Russian, which bore the name of the "Bishop of Waltham," from having given them a clipper from Waltham Abbey the previous season.

The last entry in diary for season 1852-1853 being Tuesday, April 12th.) "Tuesday week, East Grinstead, to finish the season," were the words of melancholy import, announcing this to be the end of one's healthful and exhilarating amusement, and that for months at least sombre work and wearing anxiety would be unrelieved by these charming oases of the desert. And yet the feeling was a mingled one, which arose on reading this announcement, for the troubles, vexations and disappointments attendant upon the endeavour to obtain the recreation and yet attend to business and other weighty matters, and keep unsympathising because unsportsmanlike partners, in good humour, always makes the end of the season feel like a sort of relief until it has ended, and one begins to realise in the altered tone of health and spirits how much one has lost and how well worthy it was of extra exertion to obtain a taste of its delights.

Will the day ever arrive when I shall be free to take as many days as I like without question or difficulty? * or shall I then enjoy them as much? The first question I should have been inclined to answer more hopefully at the beginning of the past season than I feel I dare do now at the close of it, and this consciousness has immensely detracted from the pleasure of what otherwise has been both a good and fortunate season, taking it all in all. To the latter question I think I may safely reply it would be very well worth sacrificing a little of the keen edge of enjoyment to be spared the heavy conditions on which it obtained, and that my hope and belief is, I should really enjoy it more on the whole, in anything like a decent country.

* It did arrive, but I don't think Mr. Vickerman enjoyed his sport any better for it. "All things are with more pleasure chased than enjoyed," says the poet.—Ed.

SEASON 1853-1854.

October 10th, 1853. A twelvemonth of unexampled wet weather has elapsed since the opening of last season, and a new one has begun without any intermediate summer. Old chroniclers declare that there has been no parallel for half a century, while a day in July during which two and three-quarter inches of rain fell in twelve hours, is said to have been unequalled for a century. As a necessary consequence there has been a very deficient harvest and failure of the potato crop, causes of themselves sufficient, without reference to the imminent risk of war with Russia on the Turkish question which has kept the world alarmed for six months and now looks more threatening than ever, to give reasons for apprehending a trying winter; while as if to complete the melancholy chapter the cholera has reappeared, making frightful ravages at Marseilles and Lyons, and the weather seers are predicting a severe winter, which, though it may stop the cholera, will equally stop hunting.

In regard to horses, I have made some changes since last season, and having parted with "Peep o' Day" and bought a brown horse called "Lottery" from Follett, which, however, I do not much like and must let go. I have bought also a splendid little thoroughbred chestnut, named "Topthorn," who ran as a stallion under the less euphonious name of "Martin Chuzzlewit," and a thoroughbred grey gelding named "The Novice," the winner of some races and steeplechases. Both belonged to Hopkins last season, though I purchased neither directly of him, for "Topthorn" I bought of Charles Turner, and "The Novice" of Mr. William Whitfield. "Wide-awake," after a year's rest and treatment looks a picture, but his keeping sound seems doubtful; "Daylight," after his ineffectual bleeding in the foot by Field, has been unnerved, and I am still in doubt as to the success of the operation. "Tipperary" keeps a suspicious cough and seems of delicate constitution; "Rocket's" serviceable eye gets weaker and will, I fear, follow the fate of the other, while he shies badly in consequence. "Taunton," and a good-shaped chestnut mare, have both been turned out, and the pony, like ponies in general, gives least trouble and is most serviceable (to the ladies at least) of the stud.

I am again tantalised as I was last year by the offer of Stondon Place, but with the Manor House on my hands, see no chance of accepting it. The kennels of the new Master of the foxhounds, Henley Greaves, being at Myless, form a great additional attraction, &c.

(The old Surrey foxhounds had their usual opening day, being the first Monday after Croydon Fair, at their kennels. A month later Mr. Vickerman writes) :—Never was I so unlucky before with a stable full of horses ; after giving two away I am really without a sound hunter to take me through the season. So to Tattersall's I went on Monday, November 28th, and being disappointed in not buying a chestnut horse of Captain Havilands, I bid for and bought for thirty guineas another chestnut (97), described as a good hunter and hack, one of a stud of three, the property of a gentleman, a likely-looking and well-bred and shaped horse of 15.2. I sent him on by Beckington this morning, Tuesday, to Godstone, along with "Tipperary," whom I was going to hunt, and hacked on "Taunton." On reaching Godstone, Beckington, with a long face, told me that he had had as much as he could do to get the horse there. He had lain down twice in the road, and had to be driven forward by a countryman.

That night Beckington could only get him as far as the "Half Moon," and was all the next day, Wednesday, in getting him to Croydon ; and thence by rail to London, but he was compelled to leave him for the night at Osborne's, the poor beast being unable to travel further. I then wrote to Tattersall's desiring them to return the money, and the following day met the horse at Field's, who, after a longish examination pronounced him to have a disease in the back. His certificate was brought to me while I was with Edward Tattersall, who had shown me his horses and given me some lunch, and they agreed to receive the horse back and do what they could in the matter.

(Hunting in Essex on Saturday, December 24th, 1853, Mr. Vickerman writes) :—This morning I was not called until nine o'clock, and was then told that hunting was practicable, though a smart snow-storm during breakfast did not seem to augur favourably. However, it proved to be only a storm, and at eleven o'clock I started to meet the Essex foxhounds (Henley Greaves) at the "Axe and Compasses," High Roothing, at the same hour. This was vexatious, but there being no help for it I trotted quietly along, solacing myself with looking at the old country, and speculating that as these hounds had had so many blank days this season (no less than ten already) we might be in time after all.

At Leaden Roothing, where the stables are greatly improved, and the house taken by young William Cassidy, I got information from the ostler, whom I was glad to see there still, of

the coverts they intended to draw, and rode on towards Garnetts, hit them off while in full cry, running on to Dunmow High Woods, and Lord Maynard's Park, and from there to Prior's Wood, where a leash of foxes were afoot which saved our hunted fox.

Greaves must have been pleased with the day, for he was irate in the morning, and with good reason, at the want of foxes and the warnings off he had encountered in the Roothings, and was announcing that he must call the subscribers together, and tell them that the country would not suit him unless there was an improvement in the state of things.

It was very agreeable to see the old country again which looked as delightfully wide and yet not flat, after cramped and hilly Surrey; to behold old faces seen only in pleasant meetings, and therefore calling up pleasurable associations, and to find every one apparently well pleased to see me again. There were also many new faces, while the establishment being new, tended to dispel the charm of having gone back on the dial some years. The hounds looked well-bred and are said to be fast, but do not seem very fond of drawing, and the men both like sinewy Yorkshiremen, and are well mounted, but they do not get over these peculiar fences like those who have served a longer apprenticeship to them.

East Grinstead and "Snowstorm" were the fixture and the stag selected for the finish of the season, as they were last year, though scarcely half the horsemen mustered this year as compared with last, probably deterred by the hard state of the ground.

"Snowstorm" was uncarted in the same meadow and looked like taking the same line, but presently inclined more to the left before reaching the noted double fence, and crossed the turnpike road. Plenty of timber coming in the line rendered the field so select, that Metcalfe on his grey, and myself on the "Clipper," were the only two with the hounds, the others forming a very long tail. I soon found that the "Clipper" had the heels of the grey, but some road work occurring we pulled back, and George and a few others came up, as hounds checked at a pond by a farmyard in which the Deer had taken refuge.

Quitting the pond he again took to the enclosures, over a line of timber jumps, at one of which Metcalfe kindly carried away every rail, until we came to a green with a high hedge and double ditch out of it. Heathcote's white horse refused and put him neatly over his head. Baily's chestnut did it cleverly; the rest went round by the road, and the "Clipper"

wishing to follow them, declined two or three times, showed temper and reared, but by quiet treatment took the double cleverly, and his speed soon enabled me to resume my place before we ran up to our deer in a farmyard belonging to Surborough Castle.

The stag was eventually taken in the river Eden, at the identical spot to which he had run on the last occasion of his being hunted. But then, he had been uncarted at Crawley, and the run (in which I was most fortunate enough to share) was one of the best of the season.

Taking farewell of Heathcote, and thanking him for the capital sport he had shown us throughout the season, I rode quietly on with an agreeable party, consisting of Nickall, Metcalfe, A. Warner, Telford, &c., to Limpsfield, when at the snug little inn, we had a capital luncheon of ham and eggs, and mutton chops, after grateful ablutions *al fresco*, as a wind up to the season; and our horses were equally fortunate, in revelling upon white carrots, which the "Clipper" ate as fast as I could slice them. He and "Repealer," a great bony horse of Follet's, stood in one narrow stall, and in attempting to pass between them, they closed together upon me, and it required all my strength and dexterity to extricate myself, the raw hip bones of "Repealer" making themselves acutely sensible between my shoulder blades.*

An easy and delightful ride home up Botley Hill, over Worms Heath and through Sanderstead, with hedges budding, birds singing and rejoicing, banks lined with primroses and violets, finished the day as it finished the season—most agreeably.

Season 1854-55.

The last twelve months have been as noticeable for a prevalence of dry weather as those preceding them were notorious for heavy rains. Wales, however, must be excepted, for there wet seems to be the normal state, and fair weather the exception. The past summer has been characterised by three chief events, which have influenced one's feelings and actions; (1) contemplated change of residence; (2) opening of the Crystal Palace; and (3) war with Russia. The first event is never an agreeable one either in contemplation or reality, and was rendered especially awkward and disagreeable in our case by a combination of awkward circumstances. The chief

* Mr. Vickerman describes these details so graphically, that one can almost picture him wriggling away from the raw hip-boned brute that was squashing him.—Ed.

of these were the bad character given to Thoby Priory by the Helmes on the score of damp and unhealthiness, which they assured us was their sole reason for quitting a place which they much liked in other respects, and had lived in for ten years. The comfort and excellence in every sense of the Manor House where we were residing, the difficulty of finding a suitable tenant, the distance of the removal, with its attendant inconveniences, damages and expenses; having lived just long enough in Surrey to have made some agreeable neighbours and acquaintances, and having hunted there long enough to know something of the country and become acquainted with a good natured set of men in the subscribers to the staghounds: the enjoyment derived by the ladies from our proximity to the Crystal Palace and the attractions of its beautiful site and gardens, its band and the increasing interest in the contents of its vast structure.

So much were we puzzled as to the propriety of running the manifold risks and certain expenses of taking Thoby Priory, that we paid many a visit to Headley Grove, and were almost tempted to overlook the drawbacks of a poor house consisting of a nest of little rooms provokingly placed where no view could be obtained, for the sake of the picturesque and beautiful neighbourhood and the quietude of the place; and were only deterred from taking it by a consideration of the distance we should be removed from our relations, which would prevent frequent intercourse, while at Thoby, we should have them for neighbours, and this consideration ultimately decided us to select the latter place.

The second feature, in the opening of the Crystal Palace, caused us to have our house full of friends during the summer, that they might have the opportunity of seeing it comfortably, before we quitted the neighbourhood.

The third event painfully affects the whole country, and its details are so shocking as scarcely to permit one to attend willingly to any private affairs however pressing or important. One feels that our gallant countrymen and allies are overmastered by sheer numbers and brute force, and one reproaches oneself for being at home and enjoying usual comforts, when we ought to be in the Crimea helping our gallant fellows and sharing their dangers and privations.

Bagging a Subscriber.

January 3rd, 1855. I was not a little amused at the soft and insinuating approach of the Hon. Sec. of the Essex Hunt,

Loftus Arkwright, in bagging a subscriber. He waited until after the ameliorating influence of a glass of sherry and a mince pie at our Master's * had had their due effect, and then riding up alongside me began a conversation by remarking that they had not found in "Your covert" (Thoby Wood) on Monday, but that it was generally a sure find. Then he admired my nag and hazarded an opinion that he was good at water, in which, however, he soon got out of his depth. This he followed by other polite and agreeable speeches. Then he remarked upon the excellent way in which "the thing was now done," but the slowness of subscriptions in coming in, and his duties as Secretary—and finally hinted a suggestion whether I would like to subscribe. These delicate approaches I soon satisfied him were thrown away, inasmuch as I had subscribed to Conyers' and quite intended to subscribe to Greaves', and so we soon agreed upon the mode in which my contribution should be forwarded. This was a contrast to my first subscription to Conyers', and the story which attached to the adventures of that day.

(At this time Mr. Vickerman had a horse, a rare good performer if in the mind, called "The Clipper," which had a rooted objection to a ditch to him for the first jump. Riding him to a meet of the staghounds at Willingale on Tuesday, January 16th, 1855, after having been delayed by importunate tradesmen at starting, he was led to try a short cut across country, however, "The Clipper" resolutely refused the first fence, but calling up the aid of a lad who was ploughing, he managed to drive him over; but he broke away from the lad and galloped over the next field, and only waited long enough at the gate to tantalise them and then made off through a long line of gateways when Mr. Vickerman had the mortification of seeing him go from field to field until he lost sight of him. Let me tell the rest of the story in his own words.)

Despatching the lad in one direction I took another, and as I toiled over the ploughed fields I was in no amiable mood, either with my horse or the provoking tradespeople, who by delaying me had been the cause of my misadventure and apparently spoiled my last chance of seeing a hound to-day. Struggling on hot, vexed and encumbered, another lad told me that someone had caught my horse, and to my intense disgust I saw a drab-coated fellow, who looked like a country tradesman, mounted on "The Clipper" and galloping him round and

* Mr. Henley Greaves was living at Marden Ash then.—Ed.

round a ploughed field, vainly endeavouring to get him over a fence and the horse making away with him, I shouted to him to take the horse into the road and keep him quiet, and the next I saw of him, just as I reached the road, was the horse galloping down it, running away with his rider with one rein broken and hanging down, and passing me like a shot.

It may be imagined what were likely to be my sensations at seeing a horse thus treated belonging to me, and which one was just going to hunt, and especially a horse of a temper like "The Clipper," which takes so little to rile and render ungovernable. Shouting to some men to stop the horse, the fellow managed to turn him and come back towards me. As he approached me I asked him why he had not attended to my instructions to take the horse into the road instead of galloping him over the ploughed fields? "Oh!" said he, "you blackguard me, do you, for catching your horse, catch him yourself then," and before he came within reach he jumped off the horse and turned him loose in the road with his head away from me. This was agreeable, but calling out to some men to stop him from passing I dodged the horse and turned him into the stable yard of the Inn at Willingale. Up came the fellow who had ridden him, whom I then perceived to be drunk, commencing a string of abuse and looking pugilistic. Though the fellow deserved a horse-whipping rather than any other recompense, I tendered him some pence to get rid of the botheration, telling him that it would have been a shilling had he brought me the horse instead of turning him loose again, but this he indignantly refused, demanding half-a-crown, to be spent in drink, and forcibly opposing my orders to take the horse out of the stable, until his demand was complied with.

It was one of those occasions when the greatest self-denial is requisite to control the feelings which prompted me to pitch into the rascal, regardless of the two or three stone weight in his favour and I was disgusted with the man who officiated as ostler and with some yokels around, who instead of helping me evidently abetted the drunken scamp in the hope of sharing the drink. Finding at last that the fellow lied in representing himself to be the master of the public house, I went round and summoned the landlord to my assistance and a hunting farmer riding by at the moment, I requested him to stay and then the fellow, whom everyone professed not to know, seeing that I was no longer alone, offered no resistance to my mounting and riding away. When next I put my hand in my pocket I found my handkerchief gone and so I suppose he picked my pocket for want of extorting the half-crown or getting the sixpence.

Better luck with the "Clipper" on Saturday, March 31st. The staghound fixture was at Fyfield to-day and the foxhounds having been yesterday at Old Sanford and not out to-day, there was an unusually large field, comprising most of the men who hunt with Greaves. They looked also bent on mischief and I have sometimes noticed that good men with the foxhounds who only come occasionally with stag, ride with much more dash at first than regular staghunters, not being so well aware as the latter that the run is just as likely to be two or three hours as one and to extend over ten to twenty miles of country. We prepared ourselves, therefore, to be cut down, or at least for an attempt at it. The hind was "the spotted hind," a real good one, that gave us the clipping forty minutes from the "Axe and Compasses" on the 13th March, 1855.

Running at a rattling pace to Long Barns the large field was scattered far and wide and only a select few with hounds. Here we ran up to our deer and ran her in view at a racing pace, Frederick Petre calling out to us to ride as hard as we could and we took him at his word, the line being by Brick Kilns and over the High Laver Brook, with some awkward roads to cross to High Laver Church, where the first check occurred after thirty-five minutes without a pause or hesitation. We had now time to look for our foxhunting friends and to look in vain, for only one man (Willie Davis) was visible and he goes so frequently with the stag as to be almost claimed by them. The only men who had ridden to the hounds to this point were our Master (Frederick Petre), Sir Charles Smith, Sworder, C. R. V., Tom Mashiter, Soames, William Davis, Sullins and Stock, nine in all, and the lead was taken alternately by Sworder, Sir Charles Smith, and myself on the "Clipper;" but all went right well.

"The Clipper" pulled so hard that I was very glad to leave my whip at High Laver Hall (Barnard's) and my hands and arms were so cramped that I had scarcely strength to continue in the run. Taking up the running we passed Magdalen Laver and reached Hastingwood Common in an hour and with this hour ended the good performance of "The Clipper," for a few fields from Hastingwood Common he resolutely refused to quit the road and I took so much time battling with him that I had to go the road to Thornwood Common, and crossing it to the right hand corner on reaching the country, the cross-grained brute behaved as badly as possible, refusing nearly every fence, eventually reaching Copped Hall after a run of one and a-half hours, as good, and over as fair a country, as could be desired,

with no road work except for those who took it from choice or necessity.

The water was large and it took half-an-hour before we captured our hind. I rode home by Theydon Schools, Hill Hall and Sworder's Farm at Stapleford, where we refreshed men and horses, &c.

Thomas Mashiter

Thomas Mashiter, known as Thomas Helme when living in Essex—he only assumed the name of Mashiter twelve years before he died—was father of the present Master of the Essex Union Hounds. He hunted up to the age of seventy, and hunted twenty-five years in Essex. On leaving the county he became Hon. Sec. and Treasurer to the Surrey Union Hounds during the Masterships of Captain Barnard Hankey and the Hon. Francis Scott, and on resigning was presented by the members of the Hunt with a beautiful picture by Stansfield. In 1882 he assumed the name of Mashiter, and fourteen years afterwards died at the ripe old age of 92.

(Saturday, April 7th, 1855. The last day of the season with the Essex foxhounds is described at length in the diary, the meet taking place at Passingford Bridge, while on Thursday, April 12th, a similar record of the last day with the staghounds is given, when they met at the usual trysting place, Ingatestone Hall. The Surrey staghounds bringing their work to a close at the usual meet of East Grinstead, on April 17th and not before it was time, as the ground was hard and dry enough to lame any horse, and the extraordinary dry weather lasted up to the end of the first week in July, the rest of the month and the greater part of August being very wet.

On September 22nd, 1855, Mr. Vickerman purchased two horses at the sale of Mr. Robert Field's effects at Pyrgo Park, one of which by "Gibraltar" he christened "Malakoff," on account of his coming into his possession so soon after the taking of the Malakoff on the 8th September, and for his sire's name being that of another distinguished fort of at least equal reputation.)

Thursday, January 3rd, 1856. The staghounds met to-day at Long Barns and our hind was a young untried one and daughter of our capital hind "The Miller's Maid," unluckily she was run into and killed at Waples Mill before assistance could be rendered. She was a promising hind, capitally bred on her dam's side and would probably have run well had she survived to-day. So many accidents arise with untried deer that I feel sure that it would be a good plan to hunt them for the first time with a few harriers, or even beagles, to give them a notion of what was intended with hounds from which they could get away, but they are blown and overpowered by quick staghounds before they have learned to take care of themselves.

From the Journal, March 7th, 1856.

One's old superstitious feelings formed in one's childhood and in my case impressed on my mind by a sudden rap on the head on the ice which rendered me insensible, are sometimes singularly confirmed. Thus the dislike to boast or exult, or as it is phrased in the old adage, "Not to holloa before you are out of the wood," and "Not to tell the d——l too much of your mind," was certainly confirmed by the experiences of the present week. It happened only last Saturday that being a long dragging day and a large field with the foxhounds there was plenty of opportunity for gossip, and several people observed upon my exemption from falls as contrasted with my earliest performances in Essex. To the latter

I had to confess that I had not had one, but with the same breath declared that the question and confession were alike unlucky, that they should not have asked until the end of the season and that I did not doubt I should now not be long without one.

Mark the singular sequel—the very next day of hunting I had the narrowest escape from a dangerous fall at a gate with "Malakoff," and the following day I got two falls with my cleverest and most reliable horse, who has never before made a mistake. I was quite satisfied, however, as I told Lord Petre, that my fate had been deferred beyond his for about three weeks, for it had been a sort of rivalry between us which would go on longest without a fall.

(Wednesday, April 9th, 1856, found Mr. Vickerman finishing the season, not with stag or foxhounds, but with the merry harriers at Pleshey Mount.

Reaching Pleshey before there were any signs of the hounds, he amused himself by a stroll over "The Mount," which he notes is well preserved and said to be an old Roman encampment.)

Presently Du Cane and Bullock drove up and we heard that the hounds were going to draw towards the Easters, we followed and came up with them, and a nicer pack of harriers in breed, beauty and performance, I never saw. They show the great care bestowed upon them by their owner, William Honywood, of Marks Hall, who hunts them himself, supported by two whips whose duties are light. (In addition to the names already mentioned, the field consisted of Sir John Tyrell, with two grooms, William Tufnell and his son, Miss Matilda Tufnell, young Hardcastle. The enjoyment of the first part of a capital twenty minutes in the open was rather spoilt, for Mr. Vickerman, owing to the literal fulfilment by Sir John's second groom of his master's instructions to follow Mr. Vickerman, as long as he could, for the sake of practise for the promising young thoroughbred he was riding; but at an in and out of a cramped lane Mr. Vickerman got rid of his follower.

The second hare, found near High Easter, went as straight as a line for Good Easter, being killed in thirteen minutes near the mill, Mr. Vickerman saving her from consumption, neither master or whips being up. After lunching at Mr. Saltmarsh's hospitable board, they had a capital thirty-three minutes with another hare, which they also ran into, not before a ludicrous incident had happened to Mr. Bullock, whose horse declining a brook pitched his rider over his head to the bottom

of it, when he was lost to sight to mortal eyes for some time, and presented a funny appearance when he again became visible.

Two more runs, and still trying for another hare. Mr. Vickerman left them at a quarter past five, having to reach Boreham House for dinner at 7 o'clock—losing a shoe he had to do the ten miles to Chelmsford under the hour—but reached Boreham House at a quarter past seven, before Sir John had got home. The party consisted of five ladies and eight or nine gentlemen. The dinner excellent and well served. The house most comfortable, warm and well furnished, and alto-

Menagerie Wood

gether it was a place and scene worthy of a country gentleman and county member. The drive home behind the old "Clipper" through the soft balmy night, was a good finish to a most agreeable day, and the day itself was a good finish to a very good season, marred only by the disappointment of losing the staghounds.

In addition to giving a detailed account of each day's sport, averaging about one thousand words up to the present time (1856-57) Mr. Vickerman gives a summary at the end of each season, of which the following is a facsimile of 1856-57. With the commencement of 1857-58 the detailed accounts are not so long, but the summaries are continued up to 1887-88 and very interesting they are.)

Season 1856-57

1856		Time of Runs Covert hr. min.	Open hr. min.
Septr.	17	1. 30	" 30
"	24	1 ..	.....
Octr.	7	" 20	" 20
	11	" 15	" 10
	15	" 5	" 15
	16	" ..	1 . 30
	22	" "	1 4
	25	" 50	1 ..
	29	" 15	" 30
Nov	4	" 10	" 20
	8	" 10	" 50
	12	" 25	1 ..
	15	" 20	" 15
	19	" 45	2 .
	22	" 10	1 . 10
	26, 29	nil	nil.
Dec	6	" 5	.. 15
	9	" 5	.. 50
	13	42	1 ..
Carried to f. 5		7 . 7	12 59
fo. 157		7 . 7	12 . 59

Season —

1856	Dates	Hounds	Fixtures	Horses: Hunter	Horses: Back or 2d Horse	Coverts: Found at
Sept.	17 Wednesday	The Essex (Henley Grand)	Thoby Wood	Taunton	. . . . .	Thoby Wood
"	24 do . . .	Do	Edney Wood	Do	. . . . .	Edney Wood . .
Oct	7 Tuesday . .	Do	Thoby Wood	The Novice	Tipperary . .	Thoby Wood . .
"	11 Saturday	Do	Markham Thrip	Taunton	. . . . .	Highlands Park
"	15 Wednesday	Do	Old Park . .	Tipperary	The Novice	Garnetts . .
"	18 Saturday	Brighton Harriers	Devils Dyke	Hired horse	of Roberts . .	. . . . .
"	22 Wednesday	The Essex .	Skreens .	Tipperary	The Novice	Skreens Wood
"	25 Saturday	. . . .	Woodside	Taunton . .	Tipperary .	Takeley Toad
"	29 Wednesday	. .	Skreens . .	Tipperary . .	The Novice	Barnish . . . / Lords Wood
Nov	14 Tuesday	South Essex	Basilson Chmel	Taunton	Tipperary	Basilson
"	8 Saturday	The Essex	Matching Green	The Novice	Do	Matching Park
"	12 Wednesday	"	North Weald	Tipperary	Do . . .	Latton Park / Organ Park Wood
"	15 Saturday	"	Takeley Gate	The Novice	Taunton	Carp do Hart
"	19 Wednesday	Essex Union	Plough & Sail / Lord Hamington	Tipperary	St. Bells	Campbells Grove
					Bruins Bishop / v. the Globe	. . .
"	22 Saturday	The Essex	Fyfield	The Novice	Taunton	Ewelles / Man Wood
X	26 Wednesday	Frost	Norton Heath	. . . .	Tipperary	. . . . .
	29 Saturday		Hatfield Heath	. . . .	The Novice / Taunton	. . . . .
Decr	6 "	"	Blackmore	Tipperary	Taunton	Copfield Wood
"	9 Tuesday	Best Run	X Olives	Do	The Novice	Ardsley
			his Bayne with Hunt		St. Jack (Gay)	
	13 Saturday		Matching Green	The Novice	St. Jolls (Harrison)	Man Wood / Whitney Wood
	18 Days Hunting / 2 Frost					

1856-57.

Ran to	Time including rate in cover.	Result	Weather	Wind	Remarks.
Vargate Hill	2 hours	Killed	Fine & Dry	N.W	About 1 Brace of Old Wood — the produce of the Two Covers beat this Last Spring. Not known to have had two Coveys for 50 Years Time to Feb.
Ethey Wood	1 do	do	do do	"	
Myers Trust	40 Mins	Lost	Fine but moist	S.W	
Highlands	10 Mins	Killed	Very Wet & Stormy	W	
Hunts Wood	20 Mins	Lost	Stormy & Showery	S.W.	
- - - - -	15 (myself) 1½ hour	Killed 2 Hares.	Fine . .	N.E	Ran away with for 2 chukes
Dean Hall	1 hr 45 Mins	Ran to ground	do	N.W	Rode all late : Shot good Run
Hallingbury	40 Mins / 1 Hr 40 Mins	Killed one	do . . .	N.W	Lost one Shot . Closes and dashes
Rhuing Garnish	15 Mins / 15 Mins	Lost.	Foggy & Fine	N.E.	Dense fog in London, Newmarket &c
Parsloes	20 Mins	Ran to ground .	Fine . .	"	Thorn us off Pump Leg of Tankard
Dean Hall	1 hour.	Killed	Cold Showery, changed to rain	N.W.	Hounds sent home, because Field rode into Pheasant-grounds.
Organ Parkhedge	35 Mins	do	Like rain and	"	First Run was quick & Young Coverts
Gorrysale in Hadleigh	30 "	Ran to ground	stormy Wind		
Tilley Trust	35 .	Lost	Frosty very cold Wind	N.	Waited Yahoo for Trial . Stopped on dr Leg & the Legs . 10 Cows in the fields
Waltham Trust	1½ hour	Lost	Very Wet but	W	Waited for Run Most- best part of Each Days - Pleased run Friday of 75 Second Run very Good for three Hounds
Battle Bridge	1½ hour	do	hard fine		
Abbots Roothing	1½ hour	Killed 2	Fine Cloth	W	Trying Day for Horses - Very Jagged.
Norwood	35 Mins .	Lost	Warm . .		
. . . . .		Heavy fall of Snow, followed by Cold warm		E	Thursday stopped by Last night, fell 9 Inches deep. 24 Inches deep
. . . . .		Sharp Frost Thaw'd 29th		N.W.	Too Cold to hunt - Frost too late in March not thaw sometimes in 20
Highlands	15 Mins	Lost	Stormy Windy with sudden Thaw	S.W	Good Gallop Scent - but too stormy for
Sandford How	50 Mins	Killed on the Open	High Winds continued		Good Run of 50 Mins. Drove to Open Season Ploughing. Lifted off 30 miles from Home
Willingale	1 Run 45 Mins	Lost	Very Rainy . .		Ran round and Cast very large field -
Grimes Hill	32 Mins Run to Ground				Grand Day, heavy Holding. Many falls
Covert	Y. Y	Open 12. 29	Can't Open		Sudden Thunder Storm 4 o'l afternoon

Season 1856

Dates.	Hounds	Fixtures	Horses: Hunter	Horses: Hack or 2d Horse	Covers: Found at
1856					
Dec. 15 Monday	The Essex	Roxwell	Tipperary	Taunton	Skreens Wood
" 20 Saturday	"	Ace & Compagnes	The Novice	Do	Poplars / Canfield Hunt
" 22 Monday	"	Stanford Rivers	Tipperary	St Gall	Ongar Park
" 24 Wednesday		Blackmore	Taunton		Thoby
1857					
Jany 6 Tuesday	South Essex	Pitsea	Tipperary	Taunton	The Grove
10 Saturday	The Essex	Waples Mill	The Novice	Do	Barnish
		(Best Day - but 9 Dist a better Run)	Taunton	"	Leaden Wood
14 Wednesday	"	Tyfield	The Novice	nil	Witney Wood
17 Saturday	"	Hatfield Heath	Taunton	Malakoff (St Gall in Cy)	Man Wood / Wood End
24 "	"	High Laver	The Novice	Tipperary	Brownshaw Bury
26 Monday	"	Streams	Tipperary	Malakoff	Streams Wood / Lords
Feby 14 Saturday	"	Sm Whalebone Harbour	The Novice	Tipperary	Man Wood
17 Tuesday	"	High Easter	Do	nil	Garnetts
19 Thursday		Nazing Common	Tipperary	Taunton (St Gall in Cy)	Gulley Hills
21 Saturday		Hatfield Town	Taunton	Malakoff (St Gall in Cart)	Lords Wood
23 Monday		Leaden Roothing	Tipperary	nil	College Wood / Back to Thoby Wood
15 Hunting Days					

57 (Cont^d)

	Time	Result	Weather	Wind	Remarks
	Ham to Am^d from / To Cover / Open / h. m. / h. m. / h. m.				
Ruby Wood Holywood	7 . . 12 . 50 / 2 hours 32 mins	Lost	Snow & Cold	N	Rhine and wood fencing at back of Cotswold Grove - Abbey Fields.
Carnfield Hackt Ruby . . .	35 .	do	Mild & still	W	Line Quarry to Ruby . . do do
High Rathbeg . .	5 mil 30 .	Killed	& cloudy		
Bangor Park . .	1/4 hr	Lost	Cold & still	N	
Ruby	. . . .	Chopped	Cold & Snow		3 Cocks Fox
Ballencarg	3 hrs	do . .	Frost & Frost	N E.	Fifty fields. Started near Hind Cig
Warren Farm to Park & Warren	1 hour 50 mins	Killed in open	Wet & Mild	SW	Very dull after heavy rain early. Final Meeting at Park Hounds day of Season so far.
Garnock	1 hr 40 mins	Lost	"	"	Thrilling finish day on Hollantrigg acquitted himself well - Took to Park
Bond Hatch	4 hrs 2 hours	Lost	Frosty & Cold	N W	Cantering and hiding very bad Frost & Snow Horses fell for first time, not Rode - Finish big Light Snow in setting up
Rowood	10 hrs 25 mins	Killed	Frosty & Snow	N W	Taunton Vale - Nice Bleeding Snow
Norwood . . .	30	Lost	. . . . .		Hacked off hounds for a time the Season - a Bachelors ball
The Oaks (Bassom)	1 hr 30 mins	Lost & found	Snow & Rain	W	Enjoyed it while - Lost the Start while changing Horses
Barnack . . .	30 mins 45 mins	Lost	Snow	N	Sharp Run and in a Stiffish Hunting for a Fox to night
Garnock . .	5 1 hr 15 mins				
Brickills . . .	25 . 1 hour	Killed in open	Still Thaw & Sharp Rain	W	Hunting at Broughton for most Season Light Hounds carried to decline
Quad Easton	5 m 1 hr 35 mins	Lost	Fine & Warm	"	Thought two Hare & Hunting - but left the Start
Stirling . .	2 1/2 hrs 35 mins	do . .	Foggy & Cold	W. W.	Good Line of Sight Hedges & Fences Fox jumps by Lochcarron & gives me
High Rathbeg Bog	10 mins	do	Cloudy, wet & plentiful	W	Found at 5 o'clock just round a Block by spoiling chance for Monday
Wrisk Park	1 1/2 hours	do . .	Dry . Sharp & Cold	E	Temp at 1/4 p 3 o'clock - A Day for Jump and Ride Back -

Com^d on 15 - 57 24-54

Season

Dates	Hounds	Fixtures	Horses: Hunter	Horses: Hack or 2d Horse	Coverts: Found at
1837					
July 25 Wednesday	Essex Union	South Hanningfield – Fyl	Taunton	The Novice	Hermon Wood
28 Saturday	The Essex	Hatfield Heath	The Novice	Taunton (S Hatfield in Gig)	Tekeley Forest
March 3 Tuesday	Bridge's Harriers	Lillystone	Tipperary		Blonts Farm
5 Thursday	Baron Rothschild's Stag hounds	Brought Farm	The Novice		
9 Monday	" "	Aston Abbots	Tipperary		
12 Thursday	" "	Stewkley	The Novice		
14 Saturday	The Essex	Matching Green	Taunton		Man Wood
16 Monday	Baron Rothschild's Staghounds	Aston Clinton	Tipperary		
19 Thursday	" "	Mewe Hill Hogston	The Novice		
21 Saturday	The Essex	Blackmore	Taunton		College Wood
23 Monday	Rothschild's Staghounds	Eyshop	Tipperary		
26 Thursday	" "	Rowham	The Novice		
28 Saturday	Lord Southampton	Whaddon	Tipperary		Thrift
30 Monday	Rothschild's Staghounds	Brighton Farm	The Novice		
April 1 Wednesday	" "	Mentmore	Tipperary	[Last day in the Vale]	
" 7 Tuesday	East Essex	Terling	Taunton	Malakoff S Hatfield in Gig	Dukes Wood
11 Saturday	Essex Union	Rayleigh	Do	Bearhin Gray Horse S Hatfield in Gig	The Thrift

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18 do & p 136
15 do 15
66 Do in all
2 Forty days

1856 57. [illegible]

Name to	Distance Apart by Map	Distance Upon Ground	Result	Weather	Wind	Remarks
Pitfirn? Nidsley Wood	1/2 m. 37 yds - 2 3/4 mins		Lost	Foggy afterwards	E	
Carnforth Monument	10 mins	8h. 5 mins	Quarter of ground	Fine		Walked to Dunston, 4 carriages passed us, Tea at Lunes & Hawkshead, Lowwood Inn, & Rampton Wash Beck
. . . . .		2 hours	Lost	Cloudy		Running about pre-triumph Country with the little Beck
Wing . . .		2 hours		Fine with Gales	NW	Heath near Ephin & N.W. Way all in Same Beck Last 1/2 hour in Haze
Aysgarth & Leyburn Station		3 3/4 hours		Snow & Rain & mach Wind	NE	Bad Scent very cold biting & showery day
Willan & Newton Hospital Asphalt		1 1/2 hour		Fine & Mild	W	12 Miles as the crow flies - Instructive Day good Scent & capital Run
Osbaldwick - -	5 mins	40 mins	Lost -	Fine but Stormy & Wind	SW.	Finish of Wind - most Cattle a little Racing
Long Marston (near)		1/2 hour		Fine & Warm		Bag & Day clean ended at 1m. all. 4 minutes pace Canter Home
Whitethorpe (near)		50 mins		Mild & Stormy		Carried on the Pelle - all Pack - big drifts 12 Miles in 50 mins by Packhorse Road Marston Grange & Kirby Grindalythe Considered the best Day of the Season The Horses performed brilliantly
College Wood ..	1/2 hour	Quite Ground		Fine with very light Winds	NE	
Chalford beyond Thame		2 hours		Fine & Warm	E	Very long pace day 40 Miles of Road & a fox
near Tring		3/4 hour		Fine & Hot	SW	Very fast - no Scent Horses badly baited Run minute Particulars of Ride
College Wood		1/2 hour	1/2 hour	do Warm	NW	Walking from this Covert - Only The Horses from the House (Watson) with the Hounds throughout 1 only
Aysgarthy Moors		1 hr 0 25 mins		Mild & heavy Rain	SW	
Wensleydale & Thornton & Thornbrough		5 3 mins	to Wensleydale	Fine after Rain		
Great Lyghs	5 mins	20 mins	Lost - uncertain	Fine & Mild	SW	Capital Run 1 after a bitter Spring Day by Mary Hopkinson. The embankment the Road to Wensleydale 12 Miles in 55 Mins Horses Pulled up & Home to Thornbrough Large Fields Post Hunter Jim Mason Steam Hustler Bay Horse - Barring & Bell gate - Bay Mare - Splendidly
	3 1/2 hours		Lost	Cold, wet & Stormy	NE	
	19 - 2	41 - 45				

Summary of Season 1856-57

Hounds

Fox-Hounds		Days	Days
The Essex	Greaves	32	
South Essex	Butters	2	
Essex Union	Scrutton	3	
East Essex	Mercatto	1	
Lord Southampton		1	
			39
Stag-Hounds	Barn Rat Chase		9
Harriers	Brighton	1	
	Bridge's	1	
			2
			50

Months

	Days
September	2
October	7
November	6
December	7
January	6
February	28 7
March	12
April	3
	50

Days of Week

	Days
Monday	6
Tuesday	7
Wednesday	11
Thursday	5
Friday	nil
Saturday	19
	50

Horses

	Hunters Days	Hacks & 2d Horses Days	Harness Ponies Days	Harness Ponies Times
The Novice	17	7		1
Tipperary	19	9		1
Taunton	13	11		2
Malakoff		4		
St Isolls		2	7	
Brighton Lined Horse	1			
	50	33	7	4

Frost prevented Hunting

	Days
November	7
December	7
January	14
February	7
5 Weeks =	35

Good Runs

		Days
Fox-Hounds	Oct. 22. Nov. 12. 19 Dec. 9. 15. 20 Jany 10. 16. 24 Feb 14 17. 19. 28	13
Stag-Hounds.	March 12. 19. 30. April 1	4
		17

Greaves had not any Blank-days during the present & last Season

N.B. Bad-Scenting Season. Dry. Many short Frosts breaking up without rain & leaving the Land sticky & Carrying

Greaves had not nearly so good a Season as last Year — Stag-hounds sadly missed

A Good Run.

February 6th, 1858. The very pattern of a hunting morning, said I, as I left home this morning, wind south-east, cool and rather raw, still and cloudy. We went on to Screen's Wood, found *instanter* a brace or leash afoot, one broke away over a fine line, and pointing for a fine country, but to my chagrin at the moment, hounds stuck to one that looked like Blackmore and so it proved.

As I galloped down the ride from the far end of the covert I comforted myself with the reflection that it would be all up wind with this fox. The (dog) pack streamed over the park at a great pace, and down to the brook by the little boggy covert; here they crossed but ran alongside the brook, James Stallibrass, big Chafey and myself, then leading and in that order, hounds having turned to them. "Tipperary" was raking away and fidgeted by Chafey's horse just before him, and not sufficiently regarding his fences, so that I naturally exclaimed. "Unless I overhaul that old Chafey I shall get a fall," and at that moment the hounds quitting the brook and taking up the running, I turned my gallant horse short to the left, jumped the brook askew, crossed the next meadow and then crossed a deep road with very queer fences both in and out, and found myself alone with the hounds in the next field, and then had the unexpected lead for the next quarter of an hour.

Never did hounds run better, the fox just a field ahead, going up wind. No huntsman, whip or master was near, and they wanted no assistance, they streamed away, running well together, over the very stiffest part of our country, with blind and awkward fencing, crossing roads and lanes as straight as a line without a check; my gallant little horse was in his glory, with his eye on the hounds taking every fence with them. It is not often I speculate upon making a mistake before it has occurred, but so bad were many places that at least six or eight, I felt I was riding for a fall; but there was no help for it. But my little beauty, as clever as he is gallant and quick, never made a mistake. The first glimpse I got of any horses whatever, was not until I was crossing a meadow on Ward's Farm, with a water course in the middle of it, and turning my head just as I was jumping it, I saw James Stallibrass, for the first time since I had quitted him at the brook, putting on the steam and looking mischievous, as if he were trying to overhaul me (and so he was, as he afterwards admitted); but the turf was sound for my horse as well as his, and so catching hold of "Tipperary," and the hounds at the moment getting the

scent with renewed gusto, I sailed away and increased my lead; nor did he join me until within a few fields of the High Woods, the hounds not going then so quick or so straight, the fox having evidently dodged and twisted about a little before reaching the covert. Just before he joined me I had a very narrow lane to cross, a very wide ditch, and high bank and hedge into it, and then almost before a horse could collect himself, a bushy bank and ditch out of it; either little "Tip." or myself twisted in accomplishing this, as when I landed in the next field both feet were out of the stirrup irons, and while restraining my horse while I recovered them, James Stallibrass joined me, and then he and I in our several lines had it to ourselves for the remaining four or five minutes. Just before reaching the covert the smaller Chafey came up having nicked in up a lane: the time was exactly twenty-two minutes, distance a good four miles as the crow flies, country very heavy; this gallop was admitted by all to be the sharpest and most decisive thing of the season, as far as I could learn from concurring testimony, and especially Dawson, who placing himself last (having had a fall with Julius Arkwright) was entitled to credence, the following was the order of the first ten, viz., Vickerman (1), James Stallibrass (2), younger Chafey (not related to the older Chafey, subject to query as to nicking) (3), Big Chafey (4), Cox (5), Sam Reeve (6), Round (7), George Sullins (8), ——— (9), Dawson (10). The first of the establishment was Charles the Huntsman, who came up by the road after we had been at the High Wood some five minutes. It was amusing in the latter part of the day to hear the remarks of the field, about the run; each man of the 120 or 130 had his own special reason why he was not first or thereabouts.

(Mr. Vickerman says that it was not without a tinge of melancholy that he cast a last look at the staghounds at Roper's Mill, on April 17th, 1858 (they had met in the morning at Ingatestone Hall, to finish the season, and had had a very good run), and he felt he could scarcely realise that six or seven months must elapse before he could again meet them with alas! who can say what chance and changes in the interval, and he records as an unprecedented occurrence for him that he had not missed one day during the season with the staghounds, not excepting the first bye-day early in the morning.)

Season 1858-59.

November 9th. This year has been remarkable for drought and for the appearance of Donate's Comet, whose orbit is

calculated at the moderate time of 2,000 to 2,500 years. This has been a real comet with a splendid tail, and allowed to be finer even than that of 1811. One night in October, when seen in apparent close proximity to "Arcturus," the star rendered more brilliant by being viewed through the comet's tail, the spectacle was really grand and imposing, and something to be remembered.

Perhaps the most striking instance of the drought was given to-day in the fact of the cracks in the ground being so wide and deep that it was really dangerous riding down some of the hills, and this in the middle of November, and this remark was made, not by a timid rider, but by Frank Barker, a bold horseman and steeplechase rider, who said he was afraid to ride.

November 16th. The last four days have been like bitter March weather, and this morning the N.E. blast raked man, beast and vegetation, piercing through the warmest clothing. The land was as dry as bricks and hard as the roads, and hunting seemed a farce and almost an affliction; but comforting myself with the reflection that it was staghunting, I hacked to Good Easter, arriving rather late, and found only a small field. As I rode up, the question "Shall we uncart or not?" was put to me by our Master, Frederick Petre, to which I replied in the affirmative, and I was then told that they had been so balanced in opinion, that as they saw me riding up they agreed to be determined by my reply.

(Here follows a long account of a splendid run, detailing how "Evergreen Smoothy" on his bit o' blood got over the brook, and how Charlie Ind fell at it and got out the right side, the diary entry finishing up as follows) :—While riding quietly homewards, having just dropped Roberts at his own house, I was overtaken by Beckington with the hacks. It seemed more like a dream than a reality to have had a clipping run of eight miles and heaps of fences in the interval, and to reach home in little more than four hours after I had quitted it. This is one of the chief advantages of staghunting, that brilliant sport is attainable in weather and under circumstances that will render sport with foxhounds or harriers a simple impossibility.

(On December 2nd, after describing a great run with the stag to High Easter and Mr. George G. Glyn's singular luck, rolling into a lane when he had baked his own horse just in front of his second horseman, he quotes Mr. J. Reeves' characteristic remarks to his own man, Beckington. "Your master went splendidly to-day, I could never get up to them, but I kept on calling out 'Forrard! forrard!' and saying to all

the others, 'Forrard on.' Look at Mr. Vickerman, sailing away in front. There's none on you can't touch him!" Beckington was, of course, delighted to hear of "Tip.'s" performance, and said that Joe Reeve was quite excited talking of it.

If Mr. Vickerman notes his good luck he is equally careful to relate his misfortunes, so four days later, in a run with the stag from Norton Heath, thrown out by having to shift his stirrup leathers, and wrongly directed by a man perched on the top of Waples Mill, there was nothing for it but to return, sad and sorrowful, moralising on the inexpediency of trying a raw horse, changing horses, wrong directions, &c. Sheffield Neave lost hounds several times merely from the act of changing horses, in the days when he kept the staghounds and they happened to be running straight at the time. Though they may not appear to be going fast at the time you are with them, only stop for a minute or two and they literally vanish.

The run was long and straight, the hind an extraordinary good one; Mr. Glyn did not reach home (Foot's Cray) before half-past twelve at night. Called the "Prince of Lightweights" by Button and Chafey, Mr. V. was always gallant, so we are not surprised to find him offering his light tweed overcoat to a young lady, a niece of Mr. Betard's, who on a very stormy day, December 18th, was riding about with throat exposed and little turn-down collar, the fashion at that time, but refusing it, she braved the elements to the end.)

CHAPTER XV.

Season 1858-59—Resignation of Rev. Joseph Arkwright—Mr. Vickerman succeeds Mr. T. Mashiter as Secretary of the Essex Stag Hounds—Boynton Hall Woods—A Great Run from Canes—South Essex Steeplechases—Season 1860-61—A Memorable Year—A Mad Gallop—The Sequel—Season 1861-62—Resignation of Mr. Frederick Petre—He Sells his Hounds—Mr. D. Scratton Hunts the Essex Union and South Essex Countries—Season 1862-63—Mr. Vickerman wins his first Steeplechase—Season 1863-64—Mr. Loftus Arkwright succeeds his Father in the Mastership of the E.H.—College Wood—Season 1864-65—Arkwright has a particularly good one—Season 1865-66—Too wet for Stag Hunting—The Collapse of the Grand-Stand at Cheltenham S.C.—Season 1866-67—Wet and boisterous—Mr. Frederick Petre Sells his Hounds again—Season 1867-68—Stephen Dobson—Dick Christian—£200 paid to Mr. Scratton to abolish capping—Subscribers to the E.H. in 1867-68—Season 1868-69—Changes in Masterships—The Fire at Holbrook's—Season 1869-70—Mr. Arkwright unable to take the Field—Mr. T. Offin succeeds Mr. Scratton—Arthur Button Cox—Francis Barker's Fatal Accident—Season 1875-76—Mr. Vickerman bids Farewell to Essex—Sketches in Essex—Hunting in Wales—How to keep a Hunting Diary—Mr. Vickerman's Secretarial Experiences—Summing up—Who-Whoop!

From a Leaf of the Journal, February 5th, 1859.

MEETING of subscribers at "The Bush House," Harlow. Letter read from the Rev. Joseph Arkwright, stating his intention of giving up the hounds at the end of this season. Drew Latton and Harlow Park and Canes Wood blank, then went away for six miles to Envilles, drew it, Brick Kilns and Moor Hall blank. Found at Row Wood at 3.30, and ran to ground at High Roothing-Bury, &c.

During the day I suggested to Loftus Arkwright that he should take the hounds, and he was not disinclined to do so if his father's assent could be obtained. Having mentioned this to several and finding it well received, I undertook at the general request, to propose a memorial or letter for general signature, and accordingly I sketched it out and sent it on to Harlow on Monday morning to get the signatures of those who should meet at Hatfield Heath. With the assistance of Patmore, John Reeve and Mashiter, I obtained no less than 162 signatures to the duplicate memorials I took charge of, and there were about 60 to the third copy, making above 200 in all.

(Having screwed up most of his horses, Mr. Vickerman would not have hunted on March 17th, 1859, had it not been for an offer of a mount from his friend, Mr. R. Stevens, of Witham, for a meet of the staghounds at Black Notley Hall, Mr. Poole's house, which presented a goodly sight, the festive board being thronged with red and black coated sportsmen ("who gave a roar and a cheer as I entered, having been absent lately"), and there was an immense muster outside.) The stag went well over a stiffish banking country, and having been warned by Richard Heatley (who had sold the mare to Stevens), that I should find her slow after my flyers and the East Essex Hunt mustering strong in their own country and bent upon going, I was determined to keep with hounds as long as I could and not throw away a chance which a slow one could never recover, but held her head straight.

The first two or three fences she did well, though rather pitchy in her landing, and the third or fourth being a big one with wide ditch towards me and high banks beyond. I sent her quickly at it, and was delighted while up in the air to find she did not touch a twig. But my joys were brief, for having no shoulders and indifferent legs, and a little stupid Pelham bit, she landed on her head, pitched a complete somersault, falling just short of me, who had been shot forward on to my face on the hard plough land. Shaken and half stupefied for a moment I jumped up and instantaneously got hold of her. Two rustics with open mouths and wondering countenances being fortunately by to catch her, I jumped up and mopping the blood which flowed from brow, nose, and face as I rode along, soon caught the hounds, who fortunately had gone slowly for a field or two, and held my place with the leaders for some three quarters-of-an-hour over a cramped and difficult banking country.

The figure I cut was a queer one and excited remark from the select few who had the chance of seeing my face. But the pace began to tell, and fall number two (an ordinary one) was a hint that she had done enough and that I had better recollect that she was a friend's horse. I decided, therefore, to ease her to the finish, and while trotting down a cart road in the middle of a covert called "Man Wood" I suddenly felt my mare's quarters cannoned behind by a big lubberly fellow on a chestnut horse, which knocked her forelegs into the cart rut and then sent her on to her head. Rolling over she precipitated me on my left (and weak) shoulder, right on to some stubbs where the underwood had been cut. The

pain was so intense as to make me feel sick and faint, my bridle arm was completely disabled and I had as much as I could do to remount my mare.

The brute, whose name I heard afterwards was ——— of ——— near Braintree, neither stopped to render assistance or apologise, nor did he even turn round to see what extent of mischief he had done. When I reached home and saw my visage in the glass I found I cut a pretty figure, for the blood even then still trickled from brow and nose and the skin was more or less abrased or removed on the whole of the left side of my face, from above the eyebrows to half way down my neck, with the promise of a brilliant pair of black eyes. Thus have I been first stumped out (in my horses), and afterwards bowled out (*in propriâ personâ*) and brought my hunting to a premature end this season.

Never surely was there so mild and dry a winter. Not a frost since November. No pause for horses or hounds, and many of the former screwed accordingly as a consequence, and also because vegetation is so forward, all hounds left off hunting sooner this season than any other I can recollect.

December 6th, 1859. Riding "Cardigan" in a run with stag, and coming at a fence near Row Wood, to all appearances an ordinary "Roothinger," with the ditch towards me, but as I came up to it it showed a sudden depression in the ground at the take off. Failing to clear it he came backwards with me, but clinging as well as he could with his forelegs to the bank. In another instant he must have come quite backward, for the bank was rotten and giving way, and would have fallen on me and hurt me seriously; but seeing the crisis and being unable to extricate myself as I lay on my own back with my shoulder against the edge of the ditch, I raised my legs and planted both my feet firmly against my horse's quarters and supported him in that position, trying the strength of my vertebræ not a little for more than a minute, just enabling him to save himself from coming quite backwards on to me and gradually to feel his legs and at last to drop down upon them to the bottom of the ditch, when he scrambled out over my legs, &c. Thanks to being cool and quick and adopting an ingenious expedient at the moment, I avoided any ill consequences from one of the most ugly falls that ever occur, for the results have sometimes been frightful when a horse has fallen backwards on to his rider, the saddle generally doing fearful damage.

We had out to-day Col. Greathead an "Indian Notability"

(who could not hold his horse, and rode as if he were still charging the Sepoys) and a cousin of George Glyn's and a young Peruvian, a friend of Heatleys. I have taken the office of Secretary to the Staghounds in consequence of Tom Mashiter relinquishing it, and am determined to do all I can to prevent Frederick Petre adhering to his declared resolution that this is to be their last season. It is strange and mystifying to see how little appreciated is the excellent sport shown by these hounds, while multitudes go with the fox-hounds and get no sport worthy the name.

A Graphic Description of a Run with Staghounds.

January 17th, 1860. Since the break up of the frost the ground has been desperately heavy and holding, and with the exception of the very first day with the staghounds, viz., December 28th, when the "Baroness" and one or two other horses could have over-ridden hounds, the latter have had the best of it, and it has required no small amount of speed, breed and condition in the horse, and judgment in the rider, to keep on terms with them.

To-day from Warren Farm was one of severest runs we have had. The hind was the clipper of November 22nd, 1859, who gave us the three miles in seven minutes. The start was very bad in the deep holding ploughs, down by the brook, and with big awkward fencing to the "Hare and Hounds," Roxwell. Here we crossed the brook by the bridge and got into the meadows with a fair flight of rails. Basil Sparrow was of course ready and eager for them, notwithstanding his ponderous dimensions. I had never yet tried the "Baroness" at anything more nearly approaching timber than a hurdle, and Mr. Barker (her former owner) had told me that he had never ridden her at any. However, the temptation of a flight of rails between two grass fields, was irresistible, and holding her well together she jumped them beautifully, just as timber should be jumped. Suddenly I heard a cry of distress from the rear, and looking back, I saw our worthy Master, Frederick Petre, sitting or half kneeling on the turf, uttering loud moans and lamentations. I thought I had better first catch his horse, which was going away, bringing him back, I found our Master—who had fallen off his horse, for the horse did not fall—was more frightened than hurt, for he was able to remount and go through the run and enjoy his glass of sherry at Bundish Hall (when all was over) as well as any of us.

In getting out of the sticky lane by Bush Wood a plantation leading to Barnish Wood, over a wide and blind ditch,

which one had to jump standing, with the disadvantage of turning one's horse away from those going down the lane, the "Baroness" blundered, slipped and came down, giving me her first fall, and looking vastly like going backwards into the deep ditch, which would have lost us the whole run. Fortunately I managed to light on my feet on the off side, and keeping hold of the bridle held on so firmly to her head that she just managed to get up and bring her hind legs up with some difficulty. As I was remounting with 6 lbs. of clay to each boot, those in the lane who had witnessed the operation sang out "that was cleverly done," and away I had to sail at a great pace for the state of the ground, to catch the hounds, which we accomplished, and soon afterwards ran up to our deer in the brook near Waples Mill; a widish arm of the brook had to be jumped, which seemed to stop or delay all but myself and old Smoothy, and we were joined by Wm. Barker, who had crept through some ford, and away we three raced with the hounds, the rest of the field far in the rear. At a fastened gate into a road Lucking, on his capital little chestnut, joined us, and then the four kept on to the narrow lane going from Fyfield to Norwood.

Here we lost a little time at a high narrow bank out of the lane, which Wm. Barker declined altogether, and the pause let up some two or three others, including Basil Sparrow, who took W. Barker's place and kept it until he went comfortably into the middle of an awkward, wide and blind place which "The Baroness" had just accomplished with some little difficulty; this left three horses again, viz., "The Baroness," Smoothy's and Lucking's, and we kept on over the meadows and fields between Norwood Hall and the Ongar Road, with big awkward fencing: one looked a rasper and I saw that Lucking, who knew the country well, did not like the look of it—a high bank, bushy with dried grass, and some unknown quality of ditch the far side. Two yokels were standing on the bank grinning near two big trees about six feet or eight feet apart. Notwithstanding the trees I thought that the fence between them looked the fairest, and so catching hold of "The Baroness" I sent her at it with a will; she tried to cut it, first to left and then to right, as quick as thought (in either case she would have smashed me against one or other of the trees), but finding it would not do she raced at the fence and topped the bank most cleverly, like a deer, and landed well out in the next field, clearing double the width of the wide ditch which was there, and making the admiring rustics open their mouths.

Either my two companions did not like the place or took a less successful line after it, for I dropped them and rode alone up to the river at Shelly, where we, that is to say, the only companions I then had, F. Barker, Mr. Page, Wood and Shave, took the deer. They admitted having been all out of the run along the roads, and made a lucky nick at the finish, cutting off more than a mile, and bringing up the former just in time to save and capture cleverly our gallant hind. Altogether it was a brilliant and very severe run, very trying to horses from heavy ground, sticky through the light frost, greasy banks, and warm sunshine. Some of our best men and horses, *e.g.*, Wm. Tufnell, George Sullins, Ridley, Poole, Reeve and others were entirely out of it, and saw nothing of the quick part of the run.

(After a very severe day with the Essex Union from Galley Wood Common, on January 21st, 1860, in which Mr. Vickerman nearly killed his horse, and would have done so had not F. Barker got hold of a blacksmith to bleed him on the spot, Mr. Vickerman writes):—The day was more severe than I supposed at the time, for I found myself stiffer and more fagged than after the hardest day this season with the stag. It proves what I frequently affirm, that with the right class of horse in the right condition, and rightly ridden and handled, staghunting is less trying than foxhunting, for though the runs with the former are much longer and more trying while they last, the horse gets to his work at once, and when the run is over his work is done, and he has nothing more to do than travel leisurely homewards, mostly in company with hounds and other horses; and a horse knows, feels and appreciates this even more keenly than his master, in the proportion indeed that his share of the work bears to that of his rider.

But with a pack of foxhounds bent on showing sport you have no sooner done with one fox than you are trying for another, your horse in the meantime having time to get chilled and fagged and lose his elasticity of spirit—and this again is why a second horse is a real luxury with foxhounds, coming in as it does for the second fox, while it is comparatively useless with staghounds, not being wanted in an indifferent run, and never being at hand at the right moment in a good one. Its only use in a good run is when the owner is a heavy-weight and his "second horseman" a feather-weight and judicious withal—a veritable *rara avis*.

January 31st, 1860. Boynton Hall. A cold, clear, fine day, made for hunting—land soaking wet from heavy rains all

through January, and so recently as yesterday pouring down in torrents. Our hind would not run, and we had only one in the cart, so not to disappoint what was an unusually good field for this season, the hounds were trotted from Newney Green to F. Barker's house, "Westlands," near Ingatestone, where the deer are kept. There we turned out the young stag which he had hunted on the last bye-day previous to regular hunting.

Boynton Hall Wood

At first the stag seemed as if he would not leave home, and then trotted down the road by Barker's, turning to right and then left over the brook, and coming to a *cul-de-sac* so far as the road was concerned. Here he waited in the brook, and went away with the hounds at his haunches, over the heavy banking country by Stock Brook, leaving Lilystone to the left, and going very straight to Rettendon Common, which we reached in forty minutes from laying on the hounds. "It was a screamer."

This country is too heavy and deep, in weather like this present season to ride to staghounds, and the banks are high and narrow. "The Baroness" had never been used to a banking country, and I had never ridden her in it, but she acquitted herself admirably. Glyn, on his clever grey mare, started off with the lead from the brook, but lost it and himself

in the second field by holding too much to the left, and did not show again until the check at Rettendon. The first flight consisted of Henry Petre on a roan, F. Barker, Capt. Pearson, Shave, Poole, "The Baroness," Harrison, and William Barker, up to Rettendon. Basil Sparrow started well and meant going, but the ground was too heavy and he also, and the pace too good for his horse to hold his own.

At Rettendon we got the stag into a yard, and thought the run was over, and in came dropping some of the others, viz., our Master, F. Petre, Glyn and George Sullins on their two greys, Heatley, Firmin, Albert Petre, and Patmore. But our stag would not be taken, and did not appear to have had nearly so much as some of the horses, for he jumped the rails out of the yard, and away he went over a very deep country, grass and plough both very holding, roadways like quagmires. Big banks and fences, with a few little bogs by way of variety and relief, until we ran down to a tidal creek or branch of the river Crouch, with mud banks of unknown depth and tenacity.

The only three horses that lived with the hounds up to this point were Capt. Pearson's, "The Baroness," and Shave's; and these three, after hounds had crossed the creek, persevered along its sides, jumping some very awkward places until we came to a sort of ford, which we got over, or rather through, with a struggle and a scramble. The few other horses in the rear, seeing us in difficulties at the creek, turned away, making for some recognised place of crossing. The three of us now rejoined the hounds, and kept with them to a farm yard, where our stag took refuge among the cattle and ran with them round the yard.

Here he was pluckily tackled by Capt. Pearson, who got hold of his ears, but before Shave and myself could lay hold of the animal among the cattle, the gallant Captain was knocked over by a bullock, and the stag jumped over the rails and made away for the river Crouch.

Had we had a line, or could we have induced either of the two yokels who stood open-mouthed and aghast, one in and one just outside the yard, to render the slightest assistance, we should have captured him. The river was within a mile of the farm yard, and here he took refuge, unreachable by us, for our horses dare not venture upon the treacherous boggy saltings; having run from Rettendon in twenty-five minutes, including the check there and at the farmyard, a good thirteen miles in one hour and five minutes, in as heavy and sticky, and in as deep, dirty, and holding a country as it was possible to be.

At the river, besides the three already mentioned, came up Frederick Petre, F. Barker, G. Sullins, Glyn, Harrison, Patmore and Albert Petre, and gently descending the last slope was discovered Heatley on his grey. The others had had enough at Rettendon. Captain Pearson went well on a stout clever brown horse, which he had bought of Alfred Sturgeon.

March 22nd, 1860. A good day with Arkwright at last, and yet the opening was most inauspicious, cold and stormy day, with hail storms. Drew the large covert of Ongar Park Woods, 365 acres, and though plenty of foxes afoot, no skill or cleverness could do any good with them. We got away with one at last, but the huntsman (Tom) could not ride a beast of a horse he was on, and so we lost five minutes at one fence, and of course soon after lost our fox.

The weather improved for an hour or two, and we went on by Tylers Green towards Canes Wood. But George Hart, Stallibrass, Cassidy, with myself and two or three others, went a short cut by the fields, and when near to the little covert which hounds were drawing, Hart sang out, "Tally-ho." We looked and pulled up, but saw nothing; however, he repeated the cry, and others joined, and soon brought the hounds streaming towards us, and when only about thirty yards off he rode forward and whipped up the fox from a little hollow in the stubble field. The hounds got a view and away we streamed. The first fence was a big and awkward one, but my good little filly "Exmoor" did it capitally. Soon after the start, Hart and I made a wrong turn, which we saw too late, when we found a plantation and brook between us and the hounds.

There was no help for it but to have the brook, which "Exmoor" did capitally. Frederick Petre afterwards fell backwards with his clever chestnut mare at this spot. Then I had to push my four-year old filly to catch the hounds. Fencing excellently with the exception that, when the edge of the ditch gave way, we rolled together into the next field. "Exmoor" was up first, but a sharp run of twenty yards enabled me to catch her. I was soon up with hounds, and we ran prettily by Moreton and thence to Blake Hall, past the front of the house over the Ha-Ha, which "Exmoor" made nothing of, across the Ongar Road and on by Greensted, over a stiff line of country pointing for Stanford Rivers.

In this part of the run I came foul of the Rev. Master. I was in the act of balancing my "young 'un" on a narrow

bank before jumping the ditch into a green lane, when he came galloping by, and looking up to me sung out, "Why don't you ride now?" and continued his career down the lane. I jumped into the lane and soon overhauled him, and as I passed him reminded him that he had now challenged me to ride, and therefore must not blame me for going ahead.

Just before the next fence we had a slight check, and on hitting it off, my little filly jumped it cleverly, and turning immediately to the right I happened to pass right in front of our Rev. Master as he was making his second unsuccessful attempt to get over, and giving him a significant smile rode on, and was not again troubled with his company.

As we approached the brook at Stanford Rivers, the huntsman and the majority turned away from the hounds to avoid it. I rode down to it with Edward Ind and one or two others. It was a deep, nasty, treacherous place; Ind and another got over with difficulty, and I then essayed it with my filly. She jumped well at it, and I hoped to have got safely over, but the treacherous bank, weakened already by the two horses which had landed over it, gave way, and after a struggle during which I managed to roll myself over her off shoulder on to the grass and kept hold of her head, she dropped back into the brook, but the support I gave her enabled her to keep upon her legs instead of going backwards.

Poor little thing! her head was far below my feet, and her eye had quite a piteous expression, as if looking to me for assistance in her unwonted danger and difficulty. It was evidently hopeless to get her out on the right side, and I paused to let her get her wind, when up came George Heatley and very kindly caught her as she emerged on the wrong side. I recrossed the brook by means of a convenient tree trunk, remounted, and then (as usual in such cases) we discovered a good place barely fifty yards off. Ten minutes after this mishap the hounds ran into their fox in the open in Navestock Park. Howard was first up, taking the fox from the hounds.

April 16th, 1860. Ingatestone Hall. "Quiet day to finish" was the significant announcement on the card of the Staghounds, and the injunction was observed for a moderate and select field assembled in the quadrangle of the old hall, and the foot people were not too numerous or obtrusive. The morning had been cloudy, and I had been out early at Holbrooks, giving their first lesson at fences to my two two-year olds "Red Deer" and "Woodpecker," with "Exmoor" to set them a proper example and beginning, and very well they acquitted them-

A Meet at Shonk's Mill in 1898

selves, after getting over the usual preliminary difficulty of the first fence. But now the sun shone out brightly and hotly, tempered by a hot wind, but causing it to be very hot on running down wind, as we mostly did to-day. The ground also was still heavy and sticky in most places from the rain of Saturday. The run was mostly a good hunting run, except the three or four miles from the covert called Bottle Down Hill, where our stag had waited for us, and this was quick and over a cramped country with high narrow banks.

"Shamrock" acquitted himself very well and cleverly, and was much admired at Pyrgo Park (albeit bearing the traces of the run and heat) by its new owner, Mr. Bray, who appeared to feel still greater interest in him on hearing he was bred there. All the hunting world of Essex are full of the South Essex Steeple Chases, which are to come off at Childerditch on Saturday next, the 21st instant. Most of those who have seen the "Baroness's"* performances with the staghounds this season have wondered at my not entering and riding her, stating their belief that she would win the Hunters' Stakes. Old Webb and Peter Sullins told me this morning that last evening they were talking it all over with the other Sullinses and other hard-riding men in the Roothings, and they all agreed that if I rode I must win, and he added, "I said what I say again, that I will back you to win every race you ride in, for you are quick, and a racing gallop of three or four miles across country is what you most excel in."

I thanked them for the compliment and their good opinion of my powers, stated that I should like nothing better than to try my fortune, but that unluckily being a professional man, it might give rise to ill-natured remarks and distorted conclusions, which it would be unwise to encounter. In reply to others who urged me to enter a horse, even if I did not ride him, I said what I felt, that I could not have the risk run with a favourite horse, unless I could ride him myself, and thus have both the pleasure of the race and prevent my horse from being unfairly treated.

Season 1860-61.

A year literally without spring, summer or autumn, nothing but wet dreary, wintry weather, with the land wetter and heavier, during what ought to have been the summer months, than at any period of the previous winter, though we

* On April 9th, 1863, at the South Essex Steeplechases at Brentwood, Mr. Vickerman steered "Baroness" to victory in the Hunters' Stakes.—Ed.

enough that was. Providence vouchsafed two fine fortnights of incalculable value, the one for the hay harvest, beginning on July 1st, the other for the corn harvest, beginning on August 30th.

The year will ever be memorable as the glorious struggle for Italian Independence, in which Garibaldi displayed such heroic qualities, and with a handful of men invaded Sicily, overran Naples and handed both over to his Sovereign, Victor Emanuel. With us it will be memorable as the year in which the Rifle Volunteer Corps firmly established themselves as one of our best native defences, and the first public meeting was held at Wimbledon Common, inaugurated by our Queen.

Descending to the more immediate subject of these few rough notes, Horses and Hunting, I may record that I was unlucky with my brood mares, &c.

On December 8th, 1860, I rode "Woodpigeon" with the first fox, and then sent her home and rode "Exmoor" with the second fox. It was their first appearance in the Roothings, and both acquitted themselves very well, and excited favourable comment. "Exmoor" especially had gone brilliantly for a young one, in a very quick ring of an hour in the afternoon, the hounds running until dark and being whipped off.

On returning home it rained very heavily, as it had been doing on and off all day, and having got as far as Saunders' Farm, "Little Myless," near Stondon Church, I rode into his yard and put on a light silk mackintosh cape, without sleeves, which I carried on my saddle many days but had never before used. It was pitch dark and raining heavily, and blowing a gale when I left the yard. All went well so far as Stondon Church, though I half thought my young mare noticed the pattering of the rain on the cape, and its rustling and cracking in the wind.

On crowning the hill by the church and beginning to descend on the other side into a sort of gully, I met the full force of the blast, which inflated the cape like a balloon and made it rustle and crack like a dozen hunting-whips. Before I was well aware of it my mare had quickened her pace and started off in a mad gallop downhill, through the black darkness, with my eyes half blinded by the heavy rain dashing into my face. Hampered by the cape, to stop my horse was impossible. All I could do was to endeavour to steer her and keep her on her legs and in the road, praying that we might not meet anything in our mad career. Unluckily it was an undulating road, but nearly all down hill. I felt her descending one of

the little pitches and sat back in my seat to give her additional support, when I felt a sudden shy, swerve, and blunder, and recalled no more.

When I came to I found myself in a cottage surrounded by rustics who were handing me cold water with which I was diligently washing my face in a tin bowl. They said I had been doing this for a long time. I had used two pailsful and had been talking incoherently, asking about my horse. My first question on recovering my senses was an enquiry for my horse, but they could tell me nothing. It appeared that these cottagers being at their tea had heard a horse gallop furiously along the road, and had walked out on either side to their garden gates, but they could see nothing, and having listened until they could no longer hear the horse's hoofs, had returned to their evening meal. One of them, an old man, having finished his tea, went across the road to carry some milk to a neighbour, and in so doing stumbled over my prostrate body, and shouted out that there was "a dead man in the road." This brought out all his neighbours, who picked me up and took me into a cottage and gave me cold water to bathe my face. I was lying upon my back and upon my round hat (which was crushed in), with my head towards whence I had come and my heels whence I was going, having evidently pitched on to my forehead and performed a somersault. I was lying thus when they first came out, but the night was so dark that though my mackintosh cape was of light colour they had not seen me, and yet the road was so narrow that no cart could have passed without going over me. And they told me that within two minutes of getting me into the cottage a cart had rolled past at a good pace, containing probably some men returning from Ongar Market.

According to their report, I must have lain in the road some ten to fifteen minutes, and was nearly half an hour in the cottage before I became properly conscious, though I was able to stand and talk all the time, and had spoken when they lifted me up in the road. I had evidently had a most merciful and providential escape from an accident which might have been fatal. Had my foot clung to the stirrup, had I fallen into one of the many ponds by the roadside, or even into a ditch in their then flooded state, or had I lain ten minutes longer in the road, I might never have been able to record the misadventure nor would anyone have known the cause. That the cape must have made a most unearthly crackling in the blast was evident from an amusing remark of one of the cottagers, who

said he had heard a sort of crackling followed by the fall of something heavy, but as he knew that one of his neighbours was going to have in a sack of coals he thought they had just been shot down.

As soon as I made out where I was I begged two of the cottagers to walk with me to Stondon Place, where Philip Meyer very kindly allowed me to decline all his offers of hospitality and ordered out his dogcart and sent me home. Fortunately I arrived before any ill tidings, for I much feared "Exmoor" might have galloped home and spread great alarm. On reaching home, while my good wife sent for the doctor, I sent all my people in quest of "Exmoor." She was found tolerably comfortably stabled at Kelvedon Common, having been found in company with a stray horse at the hay rick of a man who saw by her appearance that there had been an accident. She was cut badly and deeply on the off hind-leg in front of the fetlock joint and in a position where every motion of the foot opened the wound. It was pretty evident that she had shied at a light from one of the cottage windows coming across the wet road, and, in the effort to stop, this joint had given way and come in contact with the gravel road, causing her to fall or drop down behind, and this sudden check at the tremendous pace she was going at had cut and bruised the fetlock joint so badly and precipitated her rider on to his head.

At Mr. Earle's advice I took tea, went to bed and kept quiet a day or two. I hunted with the staghounds the following Saturday, when I was fortunately instrumental in saving a good fellow and bold rider, David Christy, from an accident which might have ended worse than mine, for at a brook his mare fell, and jumping up was making off, dragging her rider with his head hanging against her heels, when I stopped her.

Some of my friends said, "Well, now, of course you will give up hunting!" I asked, what had hunting to do with my accident? It was a road accident, and might have equally happened riding to and from the railway station. Indeed, more likely so, for one's horse is then fresh and fidgety, while after a hard day's hunting and with a tired horse (for "Exmoor" was tired, too tired, I should have thought, to run away from any cause, but blood will tell), one could not have anticipated such a misadventure. My reply was, "I will increase my life assurance by £10,000, and continue to hunt so long as the Fates permit," and I more than kept my word.

Frederick Petre had become very unwell during the season, and towards its close (in March), while I was away from home,

announced his intention of giving up the hounds at the end of the season. As soon as I returned George Grenfell Glyn* and others told me of the state of affairs, and we all got round Frederick Petre and elicited his reason, which appeared to be chiefly on the score of health and the fatigue of hunting hounds himself, so that unless we could give him additional assistance by increasing the subscription of £400 he could not keep them on. It also appeared that if we could raise it to £550 he would go on another season. However, all negotiations fell through and he gave up the hounds, but said he would give the hounds to us if we could go on without him.

Our difficulty was literally only to find a Master, but that we found to be insuperable, though we had hounds, deer, country, subscription list, and the good will and good wishes of all Essex. Mr. Arkwright was heard to express his regrets, for, said he, it lets the steam off from the hard riders. Everyone had his reason for declining the honour, and mostly, I must admit, it *was* a reason. Very nearly I succeeded with Charles Du Cane, one of our county M.P.'s, for nominal Master, with Henry Petre and myself as a working committee, but while matters were just on the balance I had to leave him, and in the meantime the hounds were sold and went out of the county into Kent, and there was an end of the affair—and of our hopes for another season.

December 21st, 1861. Galleywood the fixture, and with a pattern of a "hunting morning," wind N.E., but little of it, gray, still and cloudy, causing one's fingers to feel cool and making one's friends' noses (and doubtless one's own also) look red. A very large field assembled, quite unlike former times with these hounds, being as practical a compliment to them as it is a significant reproach to the black squire.

Moulsham Thrift seemed to show a stale scent only, and some small coverts on the Lodge Wood side of the racecourse not containing a fox, we drew Temple Grove. While I was well stuck up in a ride behind some awfully slow fellows, having passed a chance of getting out of the covert, there was a cheery "view holloa," with the significant addition "gone away." However, it made me feel at first the very reverse of cheery, for all my admonitions to those before me to get on produced but little effect. At length I spied a side path which enabled me to give them the slip, and getting out of the covert and galloping as hard as I could, I overhauled our Master and other

* Afterwards Lord Wolverton.

good geographers, and getting on to rising ground saw the hounds and leading riders some fields ahead and a valley between us. However, I was on my gallant little "Tip," who was as disgusted as myself and quite as anxious to catch them, and so we set to work, and getting clear of the ruck and taking a straight line and cutting off all corners, we very soon got up to them. We then drew up to Blue Hedges, where our fox made his first and almost only turn backwards, which let up the ruck again. Thence we went to Cock Wood, and thence at a better pace and in a straight line, over a brook (which stopped many),* by Downham Hall, and pointing for Nevedon.

After fording another brook, our fox ran to the left, down a road, and was seen by the second horseman, so that they were all comfortably in readiness. Though "Tipperary Boy," who had been performing brilliantly, was as fresh as ever, yet as he had had three-quarters of an hour of it and Beckington reported the fox as looking very fresh, I changed on to "Shamrock," chiefly to encourage B. to do the like again, he having been the only second horseman who did not manage to get up in time to be of any service last Tuesday. It was well, too, that I did change, for though the pace was slower, yet we had the same heavy country about Nevedon as we crossed on Tuesday; our fox seemed not to know his way any further, for he went only a field wide of Offins Grove and ran on to Bowers Gifford Church, where he was pulled down in a ditch close by the churchyard.

Every face, up at the finish, was radiant with delight and Huntsman and whip were rewarded with many a Christmas box. Distance: 12 miles; time: one hour twenty-six minutes, a very good hunting run, affording amusement to everyone and producing the usual allowance of falls, and some very dirty ones, though nothing serious. Most Masters of hounds would have been contented with this, and many huntsmen, too, would have thought they had had enough, not so Mr. Scratton and Shepherd, and the order was passed for Nevedon Bushes. I changed back on to "Tipperary Boy," who was as fresh as when he came out. A large proportion of the field went home, the gluttons remaining.

We found in the Bushes, and at 10 minutes to 3 o'clock our fox went away with the hounds close at him. The first fence away from the covert on that side is a wide one, a fair sound bank with low hedge and a wide, deep watercourse on the off-

* They always do.—ED.

side. The only two who charged it were the Hon. Henry Petre and myself, at the same moment and about thirty yards abreast. He got over, but only just and with difficulty, and told me that the effort took away his breath. "Tip." jumped splendidly in the widest place and with room to spare. I did not know the place nor had I seen it before, but I recollected a tradition that it was a wide 'un, so I put a little extra steam on, afterwards Edward Ind told me that he had also jumped it in a much narrower place and his horse swerving he nearly got in. He knew the place well, but seeing Henry Petre and myself get over at a wide part he thought he might safely try at a narrower.

The hounds raced this fox for twenty minutes, giving myself, Henry Petre and Edward Ind very hard work, for he ran a circuit and every turn was away from us and the ploughed land too deep to make it advisable to cross it, except with the aid of a water furrow, which was not always to be found just when wanted and going in the right direction. We ran round by Pitsea Station and Vange Creek, where we had to give it up and trotted home in excellent spirits with the good day's sport. Very few, indeed, saw anything of the second run, for of those who stayed many gave up the attempt after a field or two, their horses being unable to go the pace, even with the advantage of a ring.

The Essex Union and South Essex countries are united under the Mastership of Mr. D. Scratton, who hunts four days a week, and with a splendid pack of hounds and such a first-rate Huntsman as Charles Shepherd and a capital whip like Joe Bailey, promises to have a good season and show all the sport which such a country is capable of affording. I have taken one of his foxhound puppies to walk.

(At end of summary of season 1862-1863 the following notes) :—

N.B.—Singularly mild open season with scarcely a touch of frost, and that in November. Arkwright had a very good season, Scratton but a poor one, C. Shepherd having left, and it being Nimrod Long's first season.

The staghounds were most refreshing after having been without them for one season. Horses (all mine) went well and without accident, "Woodpecker" (the youngest) showing great promise. "The Baroness" won her and my first steeplechase at Childersditch on April 9th, against a field of ten horses, in the Hunters' Stakes. In this race one horse was killed and two riders (huntsman and whip) injured.

From Notes, 1863-1864.

Beautiful open weather without rain, up to December 31st. Frost set in on January 1st, and was on and off in a tiresome manner all through January and February.

The Essex Hounds had a good season, Scratton's a poor one. Rev. Jos. Arkwright died on February 29th.

Loftus Arkwright takes the country on a subscription of £1,800.

The staghounds had a good season and are a very nice pack. Rode "The Vicar" in the Hunters' Stakes at the South Essex Steeplechases at Childersditch; made all the running, but beaten by three lengths after running half a mile out of the course, owing to new and insufficient bridle. Young J. Tilbury was killed in this race.

College Wood

From Notes, 1864-1865.

N.B.—Weather very rough and changeable to end of March. Frequent short frosts spoiling scent. Dry and hard during early part of season. Much snow and rain in February and March; wettest March ever known (hunting stopped by snow on March 29th until the afternoon), followed by the warmest and brightest and driest of Aprils, with summer heat. Very hot summer, 1865, followed by an autumn still hotter. The hottest and driest September ever known, succeeded by the wettest of Octobers.

Foxhounds generally, including Scratton's, had but an indifferent season. Arkwright's was exceptionally good, owing to the old Thoby fox and other good foxes.

Loftus Arkwright goes on with £1,800 subscription.

Staghounds had a moderately good season. The hounds themselves very good and fast, and running well together. Perhaps the best pack ever owned by Frederick Petre. Killed seven deer. Goes on with £400 subscription.

Notes, 1865-1866.

Weather. The wettest season on record, extending, without intermission, from October 1st until after the close of the season in April. Very high winds, doing great damage to timber and shipping. Heavy fall of snow on January 11th; was also especially damaging to trees. The land consequently was always terribly heavy and holding, never giving the horses a chance of going easily. For staghunting it was too heavy, since it told both upon deer and horses, while hounds were comparatively unaffected. It completely spoiled our hunt steeplechases, which were a fortnight earlier than usual on April 5th, making the course a quagmire and reducing even the winning horses to a walk. There was scarcely any frost, even white frosts, hunting having only been stopped by it on two occasions, and these together did not extend beyond a week.

Foxhounds generally had a good season, and a long open one; Scratton had an extraordinary good one, better (he thinks) than even the best with his former good Huntsman, Charles Shepherd. His present Huntsman, Henry Rees, of Welsh extraction, is one of the right sort with his heart in his work. Arkwright had but a poor season, and the shortcomings of his Huntsman, Tom Wilson, were but too apparent. Parry had even a worse season than Arkwright. My opening day with Lort Phillips was a good one. He had a bad fall (into the road) about the middle of the season, and was unable to go out all the rest of the season, never fairly recovered, and died on October 30th, 1866.

Staghounds. The state of the country too heavy for pleasurable staghunting and our Master, Frederick Petre, was a cripple with sciatica and never once went out with his hounds, which were hunted by F. Barker.

On Friday, April 13th, at the Cheltenham S. C., I was on the grand stand with G. L———, junr., when the whole centre of it came down with a crash, and 300 people were precipitated to the ground just at the finish of the first race

Many broken limbs and ribs were the result; my escape was a narrow one, for the man who stood immediately behind me, Mr. Griffiths, of C———, with his hands on my shoulders, was nearly killed and is crippled for life.

From Notes, 1866-1867.

Another wet, heavy and boisterous season throughout. Two severe frosts in January stopped hunting for three weeks. March, with deep and continuous snow and frost, was like a second January. December was open but very wet and stormy. February was a beautiful hunting month. In April to the end the land was as heavy as in mid-winter. Our steeplechase course, as late as April 25th, though drier on surface, was even more sticky and holding than last year, making examples of most of the horses and giving more falls than on any previous occasion.

Foxhounds in Essex did not have so good a season as last year. In Loftus Arkwright's case it was chiefly the fault of the Huntsman, Tom Wilson, who with the first whip, "Fat Jim," is leaving at the end of the season. Scratton's Huntsman, Harry Rees, is good, quick and persevering, but his country is very sticky and dirty in such a season as this has been.

Harriers. Except two days with deer, saw no sport with them.

Staghounds. The deer ran well and strong, and the country being deep and holding, our horses had enough to do to hold their own. Our Master, Frederick Petre, hunted them, and consequently we had longer and more dragging runs than last season. We hunted on Friday, April 12th, and to the surprise of all the subscribers, the hounds were sold on the following Monday and went out of the country, before our Master had vouchsafed a decided reply to the enquiry whether he would or not continue them for another season, and without giving us the chance of buying them.

From Notes, 1867-1868.

Weather. November and February, ordinarily two of the wettest months, were the driest on record. December alternated between frosts and slow dry thaws. January, for the first half, was continuous frost and snow, and for the latter half was very wet and stormy, giving me four soakings. March was mild and moist, therefore it was not a good season for hunting.

Foxhounds. Arkwright having a new Huntsman and first whip in Stephen Dobson and Dick Christian—both being great

improvements on their predecessors, the former coming from Lord Fitzwilliam's country and the latter being grandson, and a not unworthy representative of his renowned namesake—had a very fair season's sport, above the average. But by neglect and mismanagement he allowed all my foxes in Thoby Wood to be trapped and slaughtered by Mills, of Swallows Cross, of fox-destroying notoriety.

A hunt dinner was given to Loftus Arkwright on March 24th. Scratton had but a poor season, and his temper, never very good, was certainly not improved on the very last day of the season, when his supporters had subscribed most liberally, and had added £200 to abolish "capping." * He stopped the hounds and sent them home without any adequate reason, to the disgust and annoyance of a large field, including several ladies.

Harriers. Tom Bridge's is a very fine pack, and mostly have good sport, though their quaint old Master likes to keep them to himself as much as possible.

Frederick Petre's is a new and mixed lot and will doubtless be improved, unless, indeed, he gives them up, in consequence of his wife's decease.

Staghounds. My exertions, aided by the kind and efficient support of Lord Petre, were successful in re-establishing the staghounds, Mr. Henry Petre consented to take the Mastership on a guarantee from myself and my friends, and arranged with Francis Barker for meeting the hounds and keeping both hounds and deer, and Lord Petre built kennels at "Westlands," consequently I had the advantage of having them in my own parish. Arthur Heathcote, to whom our old pack had been sold, let us have back some six or eight couples on my representation, and other hounds were purchased.

Considering the weather, and that the hounds were strange to each other and to their business, and all the establishment new, they had a good season, with very fair sport. The runs, perhaps, were mostly too long, but that is unavoidable when scent is deficient, and the deer mostly ran out of the good country and into the cramped parts about Chelmsford, Ongar and Epping. But our Huntsman was persevering, up to his work, and knew every inch of the country, and our Master was courteous and conciliatory, enjoying the sport and going like a workman. The fixtures were more widely distributed than of yore, and the hounds were more popular than ever, better supported and every one pleased and satisfied.

* This is interesting in view of the tendency of the present day, 1900, for some Hunts to introduce capping as a means of increasing the Poultry Fund and diminishing the size of the fields.—Ed.

List of Subscribers to the Essex Hounds, for the Season, 1867-1868.

The Lord Petre... ...	£50	0	0
Sir C. C. Smith, Bart. ...	52	10	0
Mr. J. W. P. Watlington	52	10	0
,, O. E. Coope ...	52	10	0
,, H. D. Raincock ...	50	0	0
,, J. A. Houblon ...	50	0	0
,, A. Pryor	50	0	0
,, E. Eyre	31	10	0
,, S. L. Howard ...	31	10	0
,, D. McIntosh ...	31	10	0
,, A. Trollope... ...	31	10	0
,, C. F. Young ...	31	10	0
,, T. Mashiter ...	31	10	0
,, M. Hetherington ...	31	10	0
,, H. J. Selwin-Ibbetson, M.P. ...	30	0	0
,, E. Boards	30	0	0
,, L. J. Doxat... ...	26	5	0
,, A. Caldecott ...	26	5	0
,, W. Block	26	5	0
Sir T. F. Buxton, Bart, M.P.	25	0	0
Mr. E. N. Buxton ...	25	0	0
,, J. D. Hill	25	0	0
,, R. Cotton	25	0	0
,, R. B. Heathcote ...	25	0	0
,, E. Cunliffe	25	0	0
,, A. Deacon	21	0	0
,, C. R. Vickerman ...	21	0	0
,, J. H. Smee	21	0	0
,, T. D. Ridley ...	21	0	0
,, S. Young	21	0	0
,, H. Champion saddler, 261, Oxford Street	20	0	0
,, H. Quare	20	0	0
,, R. Shanks	20	0	0
,, C. L. Hope... ...	20	0	0
Sir B. P. Henniker, Bart.	20	0	0
Mr. W. E. Gledstanes ...	20	0	0
,, C. J. Bury	15	15	0
,, F. Broughton ...	15	15	0
,, E. Ind	15	15	0
,, T. K. Fletcher ...	15	15	0
,, O. Perry	15	15	0
Capt. F. Arrow	15	0	0
Mr. O. Hanbury ...	15	0	0
,, T. B. Quare ...	15	0	0
,, L. Soames	15	0	0
,, W. Stout	15	0	0
Capt. A. J. Tufnell ...	15	0	0
Col. M. Wood	15	0	0
Mr. H. W. Elder ...	£10	10	0
,, F. Cornwell ...	10	10	0
,, R. Letchford ...	10	10	0
,, W. L. Manby ...	10	10	0
,, S. Pole	10	10	0
,, W. C. Metcalfe ...	10	10	0
,, W. Single	10	10	0
,, J. Wragg	10	10	0
,, L. Hand	10	10	0
,, C. Bedells	10	10	0
,, H. Trollope... ...	10	10	0
,, W. Willett	10	10	0
,, A. G. Robinson ...	10	10	0
,, M. W. Corey ...	10	10	0
,, C. Cure	10	0	0
Rev. L. Cure	10	0	0
Mr. J. Pomeroy... ...	10	0	0
,, J. Stallibrass ...	10	0	0
,, W. M. B.	10	0	0
,, O. D. Robison ...	10	0	0
,, T. O. Springfield ...	10	0	0
,, J. Windus	10	0	0
The Hon. F. Petre ...	10	0	0
Mr. A. Smith	10	0	0
,, J. B. Hewitt ...	10	0	0
,, A. C. Murton ...	10	0	0
,, A. Arkwright ...	10	0	0
,, A. Chetwode ...	10	0	0
,, H. P. D. Meyer ...	10	0	0
,, J. T. Foster... ...	10	0	0
,, R. Laxton	10	0	0
Capt. J. Hastie	10	0	0
Mr. G. C. Finnis ...	5	5	0
,, C. Lee	5	5	0
,, H. C. Lloyd ...	5	5	0
,, G. H. Dawson ...	5	5	0
,, W. Alger	5	0	0
,, J. F. Wilson, V.S....	5	0	0
Balance from last year	14	0	0
Per Secretary ...	22	10	0
	£1,670	0	0

Guarantee Subscription.

Sir C. C. Smith, Bart. ...	10	0	0
Mr. A. Trollope... ...	10	0	0
,, S. Howard	10	0	0
,, H. J. Selwin-Ibbetson, M.P. ...	10	0	0
,, T. Mashiter ...	10	0	0
Carried forward	£1720	0	0

Brought forward	£1,720	0	0
Mr. F. A. S. Fane ...	10	0	0
,, H. Smee	10	0	0
,, M. Hetherington ...	10	0	0
,, C. F. Young ...	10	0	0
,, A. Caldecott ...	10	0	0
Bundish Hall.	£1,770	0	0

Brought forward	£1,770	0	0
Mr. J. W. P. Watlington	10	0	0
,, E. Boards	10	0	0
,, W. Block	10	0	0
	£1,800	0	0

LOUIS SOAMES, *Hon. Sec.*

NOTES, 1868-69.

Weather. November was dry and cold. March was very cold with snow and keen biting winds. December, January and February, were mild and moist, with frequent storms. The whole season was singularly open. Hunting was stopped for a week only by frost; our real and only winter was in March. April and May were seasonable spring weather, sometimes cold, but refreshed with genial showers.

Foxhounds. None of the Essex packs had a good season. Two (Scratton's and Marriott's) changed their Masters at the end of the season, and the third (Arkwright's) desired to do likewise, but could not find a suitable successor. Dick Christian leaves Arkwright to go back to his native Leicestershire (Tailby's).

Harriers. Saw less sport than usual on the days I went out with Charlie.* Frederick Petre sold his little pack.

Staghounds had a good season as usual, and increased in popularity. The fixtures were wider apart, making a fair distribution of country. Larger fields assembled, indeed too many towards the close, including some notables from a distance.

The breakfast at Thoby Priory was a success. It was proposed to make arrangements for hunting two days a week next season, but so poor a response was made to my circular letters, that I advised Mr. Henry Petre to abandon the idea.

Arthur Heathcote, of Durdans, with whose staghounds I hunted in Surrey three seasons, died of gastric fever in March, 1869.

C. R. V. accomplished the greatest number of hunting days yet attained by him, viz., ninety-three; riding 774 miles across country with only two falls of any consequence, and not hurt by them.

Fire at Holbrook's. While seated quietly at the dinner-table at Hean Castle, on Tuesday, August 10th, 1869, at 8 o'clock on a fine summer evening, after a showery day, the following sensational telegram reached me. "The Riding

* Mr. Vickerman's son.—ED.

School and Sheds at Holbrook's burnt down, 'Saladin' and one cart horse burnt to death. Thought to be set on fire. Discovered about 3 p.m. to-day."

Of course I travelled up as soon as practicable, viz., by mail train the following evening, and found the disaster even worse than I was led to suppose; for the whole of the farm buildings, boxes, sheds, yards, &c., with nearly all my agricultural implements, poultry, &c., were utterly destroyed, and a more melancholy scene than the still-smouldering remains and the charred trunks of the poor horses, without legs and heads, I never saw. I could scarcely refrain from tears, at the sickening sight of all that remained of the gallant, handsome "Saladin," the "pet of the stable," as well as my best and favourite hunter, bred, reared, and made by myself, and esteemed all the more from the unusual trouble he had given to be made into a hunter, and the difficulty of riding him over a country. "Wideawake" and "Hematite," who were in the two small yards, were released with the greatest difficulty, and the other farming horse and young Freddy Beckington, had a narrow escape at Thoby Priory, just at the same time, by the blowing down of one of the lime trees.

There were, however, two crumbs of comfort, (1) that the poor horses could scarcely have suffered, being suffocated in less than three minutes by the black stifling smoke; (2) that the cause of the fire was satisfactorily proved to have been lightning, which struck the summer-house sheds at the back, or moorland side, and the hurricane made the fire rage so furiously that everything was destroyed in half-an-hour. A field of ripe standing wheat in the Six Acres was saved with difficulty.

Notes, 1869-70.

Weather. November, fine and dry; foliage singularly late on trees. December, one half wild, wet and stormy; other half, frost and snow. January, uncertain and tetchy, occasional frosts. February, wretchedly bad, frost and boisterous N.E. winds. March, cold and inclement; bitter east winds, deep snow on 26th. April, fine, bright and dry, cold and warm winds alternating. Cold dry winter, decidedly bad weather for hunting and very uncertain.

Foxhounds. Loftus Arkwright not strong enough to appear in the field, Frederick Petre acted as field-master on Ongar side and Edwin Eyre on Dunmow side. Not a good season, but in this respect only like the generality of countries. John Offin succeeded to Scratton's country and so far as a liberal

and even profuse subscription would go did everything well. He gave £2,000 for Scratton's hounds, built excellent kennels and stables at Great Burstead and mounted his Huntsman and two whips on first-class horses, with a second horse for the Huntsman; considering the season, they had quite their share of sport. These hounds and that side of the country sustained a great loss in the unexpected death of their liberal and indefatigable secretary, Arthur Button Cox, on April 28th. He had got up the subscription to £2,200 per annum.

Staghounds. Scarcely, perhaps, so good a season as usual, but yet nothing to complain of in the way of sport, the chief difficulty resting with the unfortunate secretary in his uphill and invidious task of getting up the moderate guarantee of £450, while £2,000 is subscribed for the Surrey Staghounds.

Francis Barker, of Westlands, Mountnessing. Another death to record since the close of the season (in addition to Cox and Marriott), of a well-known Essex hunting man. On Whit Monday, June 6th, Barker was riding a strange horse called "Forester," which he had been asked to sell on commission by his owner, round the ring, at the Horse Show, Islington, when the brute reared and fell backwards upon poor Barker, inflicting injuries from which he died at 1 a.m. on Thursday.

He was buried in Mountnessing Churchyard on Monday, June 13th, at 4 p.m., in the presence of a large gathering of his hunting friends. His loss will be severely felt, not only in his own parish and neighbourhood, where he gave employment to many, but throughout the county, so far as hunting, racing and steeplechasing are concerned, for he was a zealous and indefatigable supporter of all three, generally taking some active and public duty, as Huntsman, starter, clerk of the course; while at every horse show he was present, and generally took prizes. He had established a fine business as a horse dealer and in late years dealt only in first-class hunters, giving and realising very high prices, and with his farming, racing, &c., he was a prosperous man, when his existence was so suddenly cut short.

It is just about twenty-seven years ago since I let him his first farm, "Gorrels," near Writtle, soon after his marriage. The staghound kennels were erected by Lord Petre (his landlord) on his farm, "Westlands," and he kept and hunted the hounds, and provided and mounted a whip, and kept the deer, and found deer cart, horse and driver, in an arrangement with the Hon. Henry H. Petre, so that his death will necessitate new arrangements, even if it does not lead to our losing stags

hunting altogether. Fortunately for the widow and family his second son, Philip Barker, though only 22, is steady and capable, and generally liked, and will be able, I hope, to keep the business together.

NOTES, 1870-71.

Weather. November, foggy, raw and thick hoar frosts. December, cold, raw, foggy, wet, and long and severe frost at Christmas. January, frost of three weeks, snow, sleet and fog. February, fine, mild and dry, after rough commencement. March, fine and spring-like. April, dry until 12th, and then genial rain and showers. Rough, severe and trying winter, with six weeks of frost and snow, and very wet and stormy when not freezing altogether. A bad hunting season.

Staghounds. Though hunted and well ridden to, the Master, Henry H. Petre, had a season certainly below the average, both in sport and number of days. I hunted with them every day they were out but one, when Pitman was staying with me and as an old M.F.H. desired naturally to hunt with the foxhounds. The result of a meeting at Boynton Hall, on March 14th, showed that we can go on for another season, which appeared more than doubtful on the ground of finance.

Foxhounds. Generally had but poor sport, the only exception being Offins, which had an extraordinary good season after the frost, while Arkwright, Parry and White could do nothing.

NOTES, 1871-2.

Weather was peculiar and not very pleasant all over. Frost came before Christmas, and hunting was stopped a fortnight in November, and nearly the same period in December. The remainder of the season was very wet and caused me a greater number of soakings than I ever recollect to have had previously.

NOTES, 1872-73.

Altogether the worst and most disappointing and unfortunate season that I have had for many years, and I trust it may be as many years more before I remember another equally bad.

Weather was too wet, stormy, and bad even for hunting, the land was too heavy and holding to be fair to the horses, or agreeable to their riders. Frost and snow came at the wrong time and marred the best hunting month, February.

NOTES, 1873-74.

In point of weather, the very reverse of last season, for last season was too wet and stormy for comfort, if not for sport, so

this season was too dry for sport with foxhounds, though not unfavourable for staghounds, or rather for the horses. Like last season, I made but a small number of days' hunting, for the winter was unusually mild, the little frost and snow we had seemed always to come on hunting days, and especially affected our Tuesdays with the staghounds.

Crow's Wood

Notes, 1874-1875.

Weather. Hunting in England was stopped by frost for seven weeks, chiefly in December and February. January was unusually open with rough stormy weather. In Pembrokeshire they only lost one week's hunting through frost.

Sport not good as a rule with foxhounds. Offin's hounds had a very bad season. Arkwright's hounds had better sport than usual. The staghounds had their accustomed sport and were renovated with fresh hounds. But I had a great misfortune in the death of my excellent and faithful stud groom, Frederick Beckington, who had been with me for thirty-two years. My hunting friends were constantly congratulating me upon the possession of so valuable a servant, and he was well known to, and much valued by, every hunting man, whether gentleman or farmer, with any pack in the county.

NOTES, 1875-1876.

Weather was tantalising in mid-winter, nearly one-half of December and January was lost to hunting by frost, and yet the frost was not decided or permanent enough to give much compensation in skating. November was very stormy in Pembrokeshire, and yet the last run I saw there was on one of the most stormy days. Sport was about an average. Arkwright had some good days, but I was unlucky, only one good out of thirteen. The Essex Union (late Offin), under the Mastership of and hunted by "Captain White," had a very good season, and I had three good days out of six. The staghounds showed their usual good sport, and, as usual, I never missed a chance of joining them, and generally took charge of the hounds on their homeward journeys.

At the close of the season I resigned the treasurership and secretaryship, an office which I had filled for just twenty seasons, having first secured a very good, capable and popular successor in Charles Page Wood. We gave a Hunt breakfast at Thoby Priory on my retirement. Everyone gives me credit for what is really the fact, that "staghunting" in Essex would have been defunct but for my exertions and assistance during that long period. It is to be hoped that now it has struck its roots deep enough not to be endangered by my retirement preparatory to leaving the county altogether and bidding farewell to "old Essex" and its pleasant hunting grounds, "the Roothings."

FROM THE *Chelmsford Chronicle*, APRIL 8TH, 1876.

Thoby Priory was on Tuesday last the scene of a most interesting gathering in connection with the Hon. H. Petre's Hounds, Mr. C. R. Vickerman making this, the last meet of the Hunt for the season, the occasion for inviting its supporters to a breakfast at the Priory to mark his retirement from the position he has held in connection with the Hunt for the past twenty years as Treasurer and Secretary. This position Mr. Vickerman has relinquished on account of his intention to give up the Priory and live altogether at Hean Castle, near Tenby, in Wales, which is nearly completed.

A goodly company of members responded to the invitation, though many were unable to be present, among these being Sir Charles Du Cane and Mr. J. Round, M.P., who wrote expressing regret at their inability to attend. At half-past twelve Mr. Vickerman led the way into a fine old room, a relic of the original Priory, which served as a refectory to the monks, and which is 40 feet long by 26 feet wide and 25 feet high. Among those present were the Hon. H. Petre, the Master; Mr. Osgood Hanbury, Mr. Collinson Hall, Mr. R. Price, Mr. E. Courage, Mr. A. Trollope, Mr. Colley, Mr. W. Whitfield, Mr. E. Percy Saunders, Mr. M. W. Crawley, Mr. R. Cotton, Mr. C. L. Hope, Mr. James Christy, Mr. A. Crush, Mr. R. Christy, Mr. E. Marriage, Mr. C. H. Vickerman, Mr. Jones, Mr. J.

Sands, Mr. J. Bunter, Mr. R. Patmore, Mr. Joseph Lucking, Mr. J. Caton, Mr. P. Barker, Mr. W. Havers, Mr. D. Lewis, Mr. W. Rayner, Mr. J. Walton, Mr. G. Baker, Mr. S. Baker, Mr. Meyer, Mr. H. Lawrence, Mr. G. Self, Mr. Self, jun., Mr. E. H. Barnard, Mr. G. H. Goodchild, Mr. Bodkin, Mr. J. Cowlin, Mr. G. Milbank, Mr. R. G. Rust, and many others.

1876-1877.

Weather was wet and stormy throughout the season and I was never before wet so often. It was really tiresome always coming home soaked through, and occasionally it was too stormy to render sport possible. *Sport:* "The Essex," Arkwright, had an unusually good season, the wet weather causing a better scent over "the Roothings," which did not suit the heavy clays of the Essex Union country, and there the season was a poor one. The staghounds also did not have their usual good sport, the country being too heavy for the deer, especially the hinds, so that they were inclined to run circuitously and take advantage of roads instead of going straight. "The Drag" was good fun, and Sir Thomas Lennard and his wife and family very pleasant and agreeable, though there the extremely wet state of the ground was trying to horses as well as farmers.

Hay was a serious item for so many horses. Owing to the loss by fire of all my hay, old and new at least 150 loads, I was compelled to purchase, and had to give as much as £7 7s. a load for old hay. The fire occurred from spontaneous combustion. From non-appreciation and forgetfulness of the effect of the average clause in my policy, I proved to be uninsured practically, since I only received (and with going to arbitration) £90 towards a loss amounting to nearly £900.

1877-1878.

A complete change of country and style of hunting and riding from what I have for so many seasons been accustomed to. Anything more dissimilar than "the Roothings" of Essex, with their low, wide and deep fences and ditches, and but little removed from a flat surface and fair-sized fields for a gallop, and the steep, cramped, rocky and boggy country of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, with their small enclosures, high banks, precipitous hills, boggy and impracticable bottoms and rocky narrow lanes, can scarcely be imagined, though since they lie at the extreme east and west of England, at nearly the widest place, there is room for dissimilarity.

But it is rather a trial, not only to one's nerve and resolution, but also to one's fondness for hunting, to make so great and complete a change, especially when all the change is for the worse and the victim a sexagenarian. However, acting on

Bush Wood

Copped Hall

the sensible maxim of "making the best of the inevitable," and thanks to the goodness and cleverness of "Sailor" and "Cigarette," who were "at home" in the country, I got on very well, holding my own with the natives, and, with the exception of one day, November 23rd, 1877, when "Sailor" was over fresh, in a slow dragging run over a boggy, trappy country, I escaped coming to grief.

One of the great drawbacks has been the enormous distances one has had to travel in order to get to hounds, and the weary journeys homewards, with too frequently but little sport to repay one for all the time, trouble and exertion, and wear and tear of horseflesh, saddlery, and harness. At Thoby Priory, placed between two packs of foxhounds, hunting four days each per week, with the staghounds in one's own parish, and within reach of the "drag," it was easier to get four days' hunting per week than two days here (Hean Castle), and with less distance and road work to encounter. Had one not had the aid of two good and well-bred mares, "Hematite" and "Winnie," with very light wagonette and sulky, I could not have reached the distant meets, for our railway arrangements, unfortunately, are anything but convenient.

The South Pembroke Hounds, which are now my pack, as hunting the locality, have had a wretchedly bad season, killing literally only four foxes since regular hunting commenced. The Pembrokeshire and Powell's (Carmarthenshire) Hounds have both had good sport, killing respectively about thirty and forty foxes, and on the five days I have been able to join them, owing to their great distance from Saundersfoot, I have seen some good sport, but over a terribly rough country.

(Of Mr. Vickerman's sport and experiences to 1887 in Wales with the following packs, his diary fully deals: South Pembroke, Mr. Powell's, Laurenny Beagles, Pembrokeshire, Scotchwell Harriers, Hon. Geoffrey Hill's Otter Hounds, Newnham (Mr. R. Thomas) Harriers, Tivyside Foxhounds, Basset Harriers; the last entry in the journals he lent me being as follows) :—Riding home from hunting, the season before last (1887-88), with Col. W. S. Maunsell, R.A. (my good neighbour and tenant at St. Issel's House), he was recounting the different packs he had hunted with, numbering nineteen in all. This reminded me that I had never reckoned up my experiences during my forty-five years and upwards, during which I had kept a hunting diary (with the exception of the first three or four years before I started a diary), and I referred to my record, with the result that I found I had hunted with no less than fifty-two different packs of all descriptions, made up as follows :—

Hounds—fox, 23; stag, 9; drag, 3; hare, 15; otter, 2; total, 52 in 23 counties in England and Wales, never having hunted in Ireland or Scotland.

HUNTING DIARY.

While laid up on the sofa from the effects of a fall into a bog with "Brunette" on 4th March, 1887, I occupied some of my spare leisure in reading some of my earliest notes, commencing in 1844, when I used to write a detailed record of the day's proceedings. Very interesting I found them; many an event and adventure, and many a brilliant hunter, good fellow, and good run which had faded from recollection came back as vividly as if it had only happened a few months ago instead of forty years and upwards. My experience is that in any favourite pursuit it is well worth the slight trouble of keeping a diary; only, to be of any utility and accuracy, it must be recorded regularly, and at the moment, and not postponed and entered up from recollection.—*Hean Castle, October 28th*, 1888.

Mr. Vickerman lent me his hunting journal in October, 1896, at which time he was in full enjoyment of all his faculties. On *January 14th*, 1897, Mr. Vickerman wrote to me as follows:—"You are welcome to make as copious extracts as you please from my diary. I quite agree that the publicity thus given will be more likely to benefit than injure any future publications."

On January 26th, 1897, Mr. John V. Longbourne wrote to me: "My uncle Vickerman hunted on the 15th, played golf on the 18th, got a chill on the 18th or 19th, took to his bed on the 20th, and died (of gout in the head) on the evening of the 21st. His death was indeed sudden, but he was in his eightieth year."

Those who have perused Mr. Vickerman's hunting journals, or who read the following biographical sketch which I have taken from the *Tenby Observer*, of January 28th, 1897, will know that hunting in Mr. Vickerman's case did not interfere with his leading a very active and very useful career, but rather that the health and vigour which he derived from the pastime enabled him to do twice as much as he could otherwise have done.

"The late Mr. Charles Ranken Vickerman was born in the year 1817, and during the earlier period of his life practised as a solicitor, his father, Mr. John Vickerman, being a well-known member of the legal profession at Gray's Inn, London. His father was solicitor to the late Lord Milford, who was then in possession of the Picton Castle Estate. Through Mr. C. R.

Vickerman being a member of his father's firm he became connected with collieries and ironworks, and about fifty years ago took up an interest in the Kilgetty Colliery, which is now in good working order and producing the finest coal. In conjunction with Lord Milford and other influential gentlemen he, between fifty and sixty years ago, built the present Saundersfoot Harbour, so that proper facilities might be obtained for the shipping of the coal from the collieries. Previous to this it used to be shipped on the beach, which was both slow and expensive, not to mention the difficulties connected with so primitive a method. Now, as then, the harbour is private property, and one of the chief commercial advantages of the village. In 1863, Mr. Vickerman purchased the well-known Bonville's Court Collieries, which, together with the Kilgetty, are now in full working order, and giving constant employment to between 300 and 400 men. For a very long time the Vickerman family have been associated with Saundersfoot, the deceased gentleman's mother having resided at Netherwood sixty years ago.

"Up to the year 1865, Mr. Vickerman and his family were in the habit of spending the summer months at Saundersfoot, the winter being passed at Thoby Priory, Essex. In 1863, Mr. Vickerman, for whom Saundersfoot and its surrounding neighbourhood had an irresistible charm, purchased the Hean Castle Estate. He also acquired the Moreton, Trevane, and Vatson Estates, well-known properties in the neighbourhood, all of which have been much improved under his administration. During the year 1876, Mr. Vickerman decided upon the rebuilding of Hean Castle throughout, an undertaking which involved the expenditure of an immense sum of money, and occupied two years in its completion. It was then that he and his family took up their permanent residence at Saundersfoot. . . .

"But it was as a sportsman that he excelled. Throughout the whole of his long life he took the keenest interest in every kind of sports and pastimes, and during his younger days was regarded as *par excellence* the finest and pluckiest rider with the Essex Hounds. As illustrating his position as a huntsman, the following extract from *Baily's Magazine* for May, 1876, will be of interest :—

"'Mr. Charles Ranken Vickerman, of Thoby Priory, Essex, entertained the Hunt at breakfast at the beginning of last month, on the occasion of his retirement from the office of honorary secretary and treasurer of the Hon. H. Petre's Stag-

hounds. A large party, consisting of the leading men of the county (including the Hon. H. Petre), and good and true huntsmen, assembled to do justice to the breakfast, and more especially to recognise the merits of a real and true sportsman. Mr. Vickerman had held his office for twenty years, and during that time has bred as many good horses and ridden them as straight as most men. Upwards of a third of a century ago Mr. Vickerman, as a junior partner in a well-known firm of solicitors, commenced his career as—what would have been called in those days—a cockney sportsman, *i.e.*, he employed his leisure in hunting, and applying a good business mind to sport, he acquired a thorough knowledge of horses, hounds, and of the noble art of hunting, and became a great proficient in the sport, and, moreover, a substantial supporter of it. According to the statement of Mr. Osgood Hanbury, who proposed the host's health, it appears that Mr. Vickerman never applied to the guarantors of the Hunt for any subsidy—in other words, he balanced the accounts from his own purse, paying for the "spongers" sooner than increase the expenses of the Hunt to liberal subscribers. Mr. Vickerman's experience as honorary secretary and treasurer to the Hunt is very much the same as the experience of very many others who promote sports of all kind, and who are "lived upon," in instance whereof we will quote a few words from his farewell speech :—"They had been well supported by some, but he complained that some hunting men with means had not the heart to subscribe, and it was then the stern duty of the Hunt Secretary to be down upon them, and try first what a little softness and persuasion would do, and, if that did not answer, to give them to understand that they were not wanted. It was very unfair that people should seek to enjoy their sport at other people's expense. (Hear, hear.) Many farmers rode with them, to whom he should not think of applying for subscriptions, for they rode over their fields and crops, and they would not allow them to meet at their places without providing breakfast, and yet many were liberal enough to give subscriptions unsolicited." (Applause).'

"Although a huntsman of the highest order, he did not follow this pursuit to the exclusion of the many other branches of English sport. Yachting, golf, cricket, lawn tennis, and boating, found in him an ardent patron, and he was ready to give a helping hand in the furtherance of these national pastimes. At the rear of Hean Castle he laid out a large cricket ground, which was regarded as one of the finest pitches

in the county, whilst the view it commanded was unequalled in the whole country round. Very often, after a hard day's hunting, he would adjourn to the racket court, and enjoy a vigorous game. Amongst the members of the Pembrokeshire Hunt he was not only the oldest, but the most experienced, having in his time hunted with between forty and fifty packs.

"The late Mr. Vickerman was also a keen yachtsman, and the owner of the *Ranee*, a well-known boat, which was formerly in the possession of Dr. Hughes, of Carmarthen. This craft, it will be remembered, won a first prize at last year's Royal Regatta at Swansea. He had latterly taken a great interest in small-boat sailing, and in his fortnightly races of the Minima Yacht Club (Saundersfoot branch) his boat, which he steered himself, was usually well to the fore."

"Who-Whoop!"
(Richard Baker, for 32 years a runner in Essex).

APPENDIX.

In a letter to the author, dated Curraghmore, September 24th, 1896, the late Duke of Beaufort wrote:—"I called the horse 'Parson,'* and rode him from the second week of November, 1867, and every hunting season until hunting ceased in the spring of 1879. He was a marvellous hunter, could have carried twenty stone hunting, always had a spare leg. I don't remember that we ever parted company, or that I ever lamed him. His only fault was that his feet were flat and that I had to be very careful about his shoeing. I wish I had a dozen like him, but I fear that I shall never be able to hunt again. The 'Parson' was much more of a bay than a brown, a dark bay. But Chapman the day he brought him for me to look at was galloping at the fence to jump into the field where I was sitting on my horse. The fence had been cut and plastered and laid back into the field where he was. I held up my hand and stopped him, saying, 'Any fool of a horse can jump twenty feet when you gallop him fast enough. Walk him up to it and see what he does.' He jumped the fence standing on to the bank, took one step and then jumped the ditch, which was a very broad one. I said, 'Now you have sold your horse.'" (See page 311, vol. II.)

In a letter from Frank Gillard, dated April 12th, 1899, George Hotel, Oxford, in answer to one from me asking if he had any mention of my father in his hunting diaries, as he was a contemporary of many of the hunting parsons alluded to in his "Belvoir Reminiscences," he wrote:—"I very much regret your father's name was omitted in my book. He was passionately fond of participating in 'the King of Sports.' No doubt you would remember that the Bishop was adverse to his Clergy going hunting. In connection with this, I remember a very amusing incident. Your father used to say, if he went for a ride hounds invariably ran up against him. One day, when we were running a fox from Aswarby Thorns in the direction of Quarrington, we observed him watching the hounds from the Sleaford and Willoughby road. To avoid getting mixed up with the followers of the chase, he galloped away.† One of the whips, thinking Mr. Yerburgh had the fox in view, set off after him. Your father then rode all the harder, getting clear away and out of sight. I recollect what beautiful chestnuts he used to ride, his own breeding, were they not? Your brother,‡ too, used to go very well on a very fine chestnut, but I have forgotten the name of the animal.§ I have a good photograph of your brother, Mr.

* My father called him "Big Head." Evidently Chapman did not think this euphonious enough to pass on.—Ed.

† This must have been in the season of Lent.—Ed.

‡ Rev. O. P. Wardell Yerburgh. He occasionally, before he took orders, contributed "Accounts of Days with the Belvoir," under the name of "Scout."—Ed.

§ "Scout," half-brother to "Pathfinder," who won the Grand National, could jump his own height over timber or walls; eventually went to Rome and won a lot of steeplechases with the Roman Hounds. He was a beggar to refuse, but he never got his own way with O. P. Y. on him.—Ed.

Robert Yerburgh, who was a fine horseman, and I have every reason to feel grateful to him for preserving foxes in the Belvoir Hunt. We seldom drew a covert of his without finding two, three, or more foxes."

A Morning with the Belvoir. (See page 311, vol. II.)

Tuesday, the 3rd of December, 1878, being a hunting day with the Duke's, it was with no little satisfaction that I saw the trysting-place was at the seat of that sporting Baronet, Sir John Thorold. In due course, owing to the kindness of a confiding relative, I mounted the pigskin, though with some slight misgivings as to scent (and still more considerable ones as to the quad), the day being cold and snow threatening. A hunting trot soon brought us to the meet, where I was pleased to see a select and well-mounted field, though I am sorry to have to record the absence of Sir John, and also of Frank Gillard, the (much-enduring) huntsman. However, among those present I was glad to observe Sir Thomas Whichcote (looking as hearty as ever), Col. Reeve, Col. Fane, Captain Willson, Mr. Micklethwaite, Mr. Brook-Turner, and his hard-riding nephew, Algernon Turner. I noticed the militia was ably represented by two gallant captains. Among the ladies I had the gratification of observing Mrs. Franklin and her daughter, Miss Thoroton, and the two Misses Willson. With regret I have to record the absence of a well-known bruiser, the Hon. M. E. G. Finch-Hatton, who I hear is suffering from the effects of an immersion in the Brant, which his horse failed to clear with its overflowing banks. A word as to the hounds. It would be superfluous to praise this beautiful pack, which for colour, contour, and levelness are equal, if not superior, to any hounds in England. With the usual "Hounds, please, gentlemen," the beauties moved off, and we soon found ourselves at West Willoughby Gorse, which was drawn blank—an unusual occurrence. Hence we trotted to Spare o' Gorse, which happily was not spare o' foxes, one of whom was soon afoot, and, finding the covert too hot for him, boldly faced the open. He was quickly followed by a heavy man on a large horse, assisted by some half-a-dozen others, apparently very keen on jumping (?) the gate and obtaining the brush before the hounds got away. An indignant holloa from a gallant colonel stopped this unsportsmanlike proceeding, and the hounds fortunately had the opportunity given them of getting on Reynard's line, not having to pick the scent out, as they often have, between the horses' legs—a circumstance which nips in the bud many a promising run. We might be lenient to gentlemen who have "osses to sell," but we can show no sympathy either to stout or other parties who scarcely ever jump a fence. The hounds viewing the scent, crossed the road, and soon hit off his line, rattling him along at an average pace towards Normanton Hill top. Here the hounds dipped below the cliff, and brought the line to the Windmill Farm; and the hounds being slightly at fault, a judicious cast brought us to the Honington road, where a flock of sheep crossed the scent. A holloa back in the direction of Sparrow Gorse brought the hounds round, and we proceeded at a smart gallop; and, hitting the line, the hounds ran magnificently, sterns down, scent breast high. Leaving the gorse on the left, we crossed the High Dyke, making as if for North Rauceby Wood, swinging round in the direction of Brauncewell; however, at this point the scent failed, and after wide and patient casts, without any good results, they trotted off to the wood adjoining Byard's Leap (a place where it is said that a horse of that name, ridden by a witch, jumped the incredible distance of forty yards). Consulting the enemy, I was obliged to

tear myself away, having enjoyed a good hunting run with one of the pleasantest packs I know. The fencing throughout the day was of a moderate character, but amongst those who negotiated the fences in good style, I noticed a Mr. Hossey, Captain Willson, and his sisters (one of whom had a nasty fall, fortunately without sustaining any injury), and also the brother* of the Master of Brecknockshire Hounds, on a well-bred mare.

MacAdam.

Capital Run with the Belvoir.†

With the barometer very low last Tuesday, and a mild atmosphere, I started for the meet at Swarby Lane End, where was a goodly assemblage of horsemen intent on gratifying themselves, now that stern winter has let loose his icy bonds. Among those present I noticed Sir Thomas Whichcote, two Misses Willson, Lord Burghley, Col. Reeve, Mr. Cecil Fane, Miss Heathcote, the Hons. M. E. G. and H. Finch-Hatton, Captain Tennant, Mr. A. Cross, Mr. Couturie, and Captain Longstaffe. Punctually at 11.30 a start was made for Burton Plantations, where a fine fox, after ringing round the wood for some little time, was run into. Money's Gorse was the next move, and a successful one, as a find was soon proclaimed by the music of the hounds in their thirst for blood. Working the scent carefully, and carrying the line with great accuracy through Aswarby Thorns, over Willoughby Brook—which, by the way, was very full of water, but still cleared by the huntsman in his eagerness to be with his darlings—by Baker's Farm, they brought us on to the Scredington road, where a slight check ensued. However, it gave us a chance of taking a pull, and once more we were in pursuit across some heavy digging. Captain Tennant, apparently, was on a flyer, as his horse preferred jumping the gates instead of waiting to have them opened. Reynard now attempted to sneak back to Aswarby, so that soon we were speeding *en route* for the Thorns, but, thanks to the acuteness of a lynx-eyed sportsman, a gallant bundle of fur was viewed stealing along a fallow in the direction of Caswell's Plantations. Immediately the hounds were on his line, racing over the grass for Osbournby. The ground now began to tell, but the fences even more so, as they loomed larger and larger in the distance. The field was getting more select. Threekingham Church, with its gothic spire, nestling amidst a cluster of cottages, is viewed as we race along, each vieing to be first, and reminding one of the well-known line—

When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war.

Clattering through the Three Kings' yard like a regiment of cavalry, we sped along the Swaton Road, where the road-riding brigade put in an appearance, not having been favoured previously, as is their wont, by their friend the high road. Sir Thomas Whichcote went like a bird, and made many a younger heart flutter as he charged some high wattle, with its deceptive companion, a broad drain. Leaving the road, we made for Stow Mill; but, Reynard having been headed on the road, or fearing the Horbling rustics, skirted the village. After crossing the Bourn and Sleaford railway, we dipped into the fens instead of making Folkingham Gorse, as some wily sportsmen I know of thought that he would, and acting accordingly found themselves riding a wild-goose chase. Only one flyer managed the rails by the Bourn railway, namely, the Hon. Henry Finch-Hatton, clearing them in fine form. Mr. Allcard, and also "a dragon ossifer," managed a nasty

* Mr. B. Dickinson. † From *Field*, February 5th 1879.

fall over some posts and rails; however, I am glad to hear that the gallant dragoon is none the worse, and that Mr. Allcard has only sustained a slight sprain. Picture to yourselves a country flat as a pancake, interrupted only by willow-trees and a high bank, and you have Horbling Fen in your mind's eye. Riding up the bank, only to find a wide drain, with banks like the side of a house, and a bottom like a quicksand, and the hounds crossing it steaming away at right angles to the opposite side. No horse could possibly cross, and no bridge for miles. The field was pounded. I thought that Gillard had a woeful expression, like Jorrocks on his memorable bye-day. However, it is very gratifying to know that Frank found his hounds after considerable trouble, as they returned with wonderful sagacity to the place from which they had parted company with the huntsman. Up to the rupture of hounds and field, one hour and fifty minutes, with only one slight check, and pace such as Leicestershire might envy; the distance as the crow flies being about eight miles. It would be very ungallant of me not to mention Miss Laura Willson, who rode throughout with great pluck and judgment at the tail of the hounds; and among the sterner portion the huntsman and both whips rode in splendid form. Mr. Cross, Capt. Tennant, Mr. Rhodes,* Mr. Couturie, and Mr. Rudkin rode to hounds as good horsemen in the prime of youth and vigour should.

SCOUT.

THE BELVOIR HOUNDS.†

Never has it been my lot to witness a larger or better-mounted field on this side of the country than the one which met my gaze as I stood facing the residence of Col. Reeve at Leadenham on Tuesday last. Conspicuous among them were Lord Brownlow, Sir Thomas Whichcote, Col. Reeve, Mr. and Lady Florence Chaplin, Lord Burghley, the two Misses Willson, Sir John and Lady Thorold, the Hon. Evelyn Pelham, Mr. Mickle-thwaite, Captain Tempest, and that enthusiastic sportsman, Mr. William Jackson, of Sleaford.

The coverts in the park and vicinity having been drawn blank, we jogged along in anything but a contented frame of mind as the flakes of snow fell every now and then as if to mock the keen sportsman. At length, having arrived at a very well-grown gorse, with a bed of willows on the east side of it, I asked a friend the name. "Colonel Willson's," he replied, "and as sure a find as any in the Belvoir country." My informant—I rejoice to say it—spoke truly; for almost before the words were out of his lips the mellow music of the hounds broke upon my ear. My heart throbbed within me as Reynard dashed into the open with a whisk of his brush at some fifteen couple of hounds who were following in his wake. Crossing some very heavy fields, we hit the road, and racing along for first place, left the high road in the direction of Hough; but the fox meant us to have a ducking in the Brant, as this was his point. This Brant is a well-known stream, corresponding to the Whissendine in the Cottesmore country, with the exception that in the latter case the take-off is grass, while in the former plough over your horse's fetlocks. To give you a slight idea of what it is like, a man who charges it and fails to get over is termed "a Brant goose," but if he sails over in safety is considered a flyer from that day, even for ever. As luck would have it, we espied a bridge, and thus avoided the chance of ignominy or eternal fame. Several falls, unaccompanied by

* Colonel Frank Rhodes, Royal Dragoons. – ED.

† From *The Field*, February 22nd, 1879.

serious results, occurred at this early period, and after the recent downfall of rain, when these tumblers were once more reinstated in their saddles, the words of the Roman bard came across me, "*Quam mutatus ab illo.*" Stubton was now in front of us. The fencing and heavy state of the ground had told their tale, as the field when the first check ensued was very limited. This temporary check, followed by a judicious cast, took us in the direction of Stragglethorpe, where the scent over some grass land was very good. Skirting Brandon, and re-crossing the Brant again by a bridge, we ran once more in a line for Hough, swinging up the cliff, finding ourselves on the beacon at Caythorpe. While Frank was making a cast in a grass field, in which were some ewes, attended by some man—whether owner or not I was unable to ascertain, who used very violent, not to say unparliamentary, language—one remark struck my fancy, "If yar wants to exercise yar dawgs, go to t'other side o' close, and not among these yeaws." I think that great credit is due to Gillard for the diplomatic way in which he treated this irate rustic. The cast was successful, and rattling along, we picked our fox up in the Beacon Plantation, from which the huntsman and whip alone got on terms with the hounds, and after skirting Shield's Gorse, a whoop from a well-known flyer announced that Reynard's "earthly course was run," and I arrived just as this gallant sportsman, who had killed the fox with a couple of hounds, was dismounting to save the brush; need I say it was Mr. John Welby? Time, from find to finish, one hour and forty minutes, with only two slight checks, and I may say, without o'erstepping the bounds of veracity, over the heaviest going and stiffest fencing in the Belvoir Hunt.

After this satisfactory termination of an excellent run, we tried Hough Gorse, which proved blank, as also did Barkstone Gorse. However, Barkstone Plantation, or fox covert, proved a find, and away went a select field—some dozen all told, as the sun was beginning to decline, and the stillness of nature denoted the waning of the day. Carlton Ashes were passed as we flew along for Normanton. A nasty drop near the Ashes caused more than one horse to come on his nose, but still without unshipping their riders. Striking off at a tangent, we ran by Gelston, dipping below the hill for Hougham; but Reynard meant Barkstone Gorse, which he made, and the shades of night compelled me reluctantly to leave, contented with the day's sport, my horse and self. With feelings of great satisfaction I saw Lady Florence Chaplin once more in the saddle, and, as usual, well to the fore.

I am not naturally of a covetous disposition, but if ever anyone was justified in being so, your humble servant is the man, when he sees a thoroughbred chestnut with

> A head like a snake, and a skin like a mouse,
> An eye like a woman's—bright, gentle, and brown,
> With loins and a back that would carry a house,
> And quarters to lift him smack over a town,

coming past him like a flash of lightning, ridden by a fair equestrian. But hands are everything, and even if I were the happy possessor of this noble steed, my place might be even worse than now, and my coat even more besmeared with the splashes from eager riders passing me in their flight for glory.

SCOUT.

THE BELVOIR HOUNDS.*

I awoke last Friday morning with the discordant notes of my bosom friend ringing in my ears as he bellowed forth:—

* From *The Field*, March 1st, 1879.

'Tis a fine hunting day, 'tis as balmy as May,
And the hounds to the village will come.

"I fear not," said I, anxiously watching the flakes of snow as they fell on the window panes. Breakfast over, and the sky somewhat brighter, I mounted my hack and soon reached the meet, admiring the fine trees in the park and the architectural beauty of Haveholme Priory, the seat of the Hon. M. E. G. Finch-Hatton. Before the dissolution of the monasteries, this Tudor mansion was owned by the Gilbertine monks of Seperingham, eventually passing into the hands of the late Earl of Winchilsea. A very small sprinkling of the fair sex and the great preponderance of overcoats did not tend to enliven this usually pretty meet. The great lack of pedestrians showed, without a doubt, that the day was anything but an inviting one. "We can't possibly run to-day," I muttered between my teeth, as a north-easterly wind pierced me through and through. At 11.30 we moved off for Evendon Wood. "Give me a southerly wind and a cloudy sky," says the sportsman, "and we shall run like smoke." But I, with chattering teeth, murmured, "*Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*," if we run on a miserably cold day like this. A chorus of holloas on the Kirby side of the covert broke my soliloquy and sent the hounds pell-mell out of the wood. Frank having capped them on the line, they ran over the grass right merrily for Evendon village, and Reynard, after crossing the old river, ran for the Sleaford canal, with the evident intention of swimming; but, fearing to cross the foaming tide, swung round, running parallel with the canal into the park, and, after ringing round the decoy near Cobbler's Lock, was run into opposite the front entrance of the Priory. I wonder what those old monks would have thought of Gillard could they have seen him as he held high above his head the mangled remains of Reynard, with a whoop that roused the echoes of the distant woods.

Once more we tried Evendon Wood, and again, *mirabile dictu*, a find, and the hounds, with a start of everyone, past the church, direct for Kirby Mount, crossing the Sleaford road. Reynard ran for shelter into the gardens of Mr. Charles Sharpe, but, finding the place too hot for him, made for the old place, slinking among the farm buildings, and was chopped by "Rupert" as he came swinging round the corner eager for the worry. This was the second fox Gillard had accounted for.

At this juncture a great discussion arose as to the advisability of drawing Sleaford Wood or Money's Gorse. The lot fell on the wood. Fortune favours the brave, for, ere the last hound had entered the covert, a shrill holloa announced the departure of a mangy dog fox (not, however, one of your ringing brutes, but a regular straight-ahead fox, as the roadsters found out). Crossing Leasingham Moor, with its wide drains and honeycombed banks (over one of which Will got a nasty fall, and is now, I'm sorry to say, laid up), we hit the Ruskington road, when two foxes were viewed, one in the direction of Roxholm and the other in the direction of Haverholme. However, the Roxholm fox was ours, and away we went pounding along like so many locomotives. Leaving the Roxholm lordship, we crossed the Dorrington road in a straight line for Blockholme Gorse, and hitting some grass land—which was hailed with great joy both by second and one-horse men—speedily over the park, the hounds dashed into the gardens with magnificent bursts of music. Here a most unfortunate catastrophe occurred. Reynard undoubtedly had jumped the wall (a very high one, by the way) which bounds the gardens of the Lady Mary Hamilton, and, the hounds following suit, smashed innumerable frames of glass, doing upwards of one hundred pounds of damage in as many seconds to plants

and glass.* This unfortunate *fiasco* bears a marked resemblance to James Piggs' adventure in the melon frame. Lady Mary's gardener appreciated the simile, much as he was annoyed by the damage to the property entrusted to him. I feel sure that all members of the Belvoir Hunt will sympathise with Lumsden for the damage done to the garden, and with the duke for the injuries received by the hounds, some of which were rather severe. We have forgotten pug all this time. It is needless to say they killed him in the gardens. A capital run, one hour and four minutes; not fast, by any means, but one of your nice old-fashioned runs.

Tuesday, the 25th, the meet at Rauceby. As was expected, a sharp frost, but still quite good enough to hunt. At Belvoir, I believe, they had three inches of snow; and both whips being ill was, I think, sufficient excuse for their non-appearance.

SCOUT.

SIR,—Will you allow me to supplement "Scout's" description of the famous Aswarby run in last week's *Field* by saying that the run was not ended when the hounds crossed the Billingboro' drain, as many supposed, but lasted nearly an hour longer. Most of the field, seeing the almost impossibility of crossing this drain, gave it up and went home; however, a few galloped round by the bridge (two miles off), and got on terms with the pack again near Parker's farm. The fox then retraced his steps and recrossed the drain, when the second whip pluckily tried his luck in scrambling down the steep bank, and, successfully fording the stream, showed the way to some half-dozen other venturesome spirits. Then all went merrily again for a time until the fox was changed again at Bridge-end, when some slow hunting followed up to within a field of the Forty-foot, and nothing more could be made of him. Besides the huntsman and second whip, only five—viz., Colonel Reeve, Captain de Burton, and Messrs. Godson, Tomlinson and Heathcote—persevered to the end. Time, nearly three hours; distance from kennels, twenty-six miles.

TALLY-HO.

WITH THE BELVOIR.†

Sport during the last week has been at a very low ebb, and had it not been for the eight-and-twenty minutes at Goadby last Wednesday, I should have said quite at a standstill. We must be contented, however, for after the excellent runs of the previous fortnight, a slight calm ought to be not unexpected.

A blazing sun, hotter by far than on an ordinary English summer day, does not tend to create sport, irrespective of March winds roaring like a lion and hurling along clouds of dust, like so many diminutive simooms. Top hats in a gale of wind are, to say the least of it, uncomfortable, and, were it not for the sake of personal appearance, would immediately be discarded by me for the more comfortable hog-hunter.

If you don't know Byard's Leap, take my advice and go when next the hounds meet there on a sultry day like last Tuesday, and a pretty sight will greet you as you canter your hack along the greensward of the old Roman road, designated by the names of Ermine Street and High Dyke. Your curiosity being aroused, you picture, undoubtedly, to yourself a yawning precipice covered by brushwood and brambles. Nothing of the kind; merely a slight ascent on a road, where, as the legend says, a horse,

* See also Frank Gillard's "Hunting Reminiscences." By Cuthbert Bradley. Page 131. —ED.

† From *The Field*, March 15th, 1879.

by name "Byard," with his terrified rider, in escaping from a witch who haunted this locality, jumped forty yards (up hill). Believe it, if you like. The footprints, thanks to Colonel Reeve, have been preserved by the fixture of eight enormous shoes at the place of beating off and landing. It is acknowledged on all hands that this meet attracts very large fields, and especially at this time of year. Being situated on the borders of the Blankney country, it lures away many a follower from that charming hunt. Among those present were Lord Brownlow, Sir Thomas Whichcote, Mrs. Franklin, Colonel Reeve, the two Misses Willson, Hon. Evelyn Pelham, Colonel Willson, Mrs. Hornsby, Colonel and Miss Fane, Mr. F. Rhodes and Mr. Welby, Sir John Thorold and Lord Burghley being conspicuous by their absence. Will, the first whip, was laid up with a broken leg, which unfortunate accident occurred while jumping the Holdingham Beck, near to Sleaford Wood, when the meet was at Haverholme Priory. He pluckily, but, as I think, unwisely, rode the remainder of the run over some four miles of stiff fencing, afterwards riding back to the kennels, a distance of something like twenty miles.

Byard's Leap Plantation was the first draw and a find, as Reynard went away at the Caythorpe end without any hesitation, and for some time the hounds could make nothing of him. After many futile casts, the uplifted hat of an old *habitué* of the hunt sent us along over Burt's farm, where there was a burning scent, and we rattled back right merrily to Byard's Leap, where a vixen jumping up was unfortunately worried. Old Sol was evidently too benign and gracious, as the uplifted hats and many handkerchiefs at work bore undoubted testimony. Brauncewell Woods were drawn blank, but Lord Bristol's covert proved more successful, as a fine dog fox was viewed running for Cranwell, and away he went for that ilk; but, swinging round, we hit the line, simply racing past Brauncewell Wood to the High Dyke, where the scent failed. Happily, Robinson's covert was close at hand, and Reynard made a bold but unsuccessful attempt to cross the road, but, of course, was headed; and, after many hairbreadth escapes of losing his brush, once more tried the road, and, to the horror of all, a solitary horseman on a bay horse was seen exactly in the right place for heading the fox, but sixteen couple of hounds in his wake instilled more fear than this solitary horseman. Smiles took the place of frowns immediately, and away we went past Sir John's coverts, skirting Kirk's little coverts through Rauceby Thorns, and still no check, and on the hounds ran with magnificent peals of music and clouds of dust. A check ensued, letting in the ruck; but "Forrard on" was the cry, and, rattling to the left of Rauceby Hall, ran to Rippon's Plantation, the property of Colonel Willson. From this covert some half-dozen foxes went away, this not being at all an unusual occurrence, Rauceby being famous for the great abundance of its foxes. Gillard having capped his hounds on the line, and after running past Holdingham Plantation, over Foster's farm, we skirted the rectory grounds at Leasingham, past the Hall, and, leaving the village, ran, apparently, for Roxholm, but, swinging to the left, lost our fox at Kirk's Plantation. A charming gallop, considering the time of year, the wind and the sun. Time, about fifty minutes. A nice line of country, not too hard for jumping, except into roadways, where the turf was anything but soft. Running the hounds through Sir John's neighbouring coverts and making nothing out, we jogged along to Rowley's Covert at Rauceby, running our fox to the Cliff Wood.

Ancaster Gorse was tried on the road home, whether successfully I knew not, my horse having had enough when we checked at the Cliff.

The two Misses Willson were at the tail of the hounds throughout the whole of the run, as they invariably are; still, I should like to see Miss Laura once more on the dark chestnut. Mr. F. Rhodes and Mr. A. Cross need no words from my pen to describe how well each rode, for all know they are fine performers in any country and in the best company. Colonel Willson, Mr. Kirk and Mr. Maudesley also rode extremely well to hounds.

SCOUT.

The following interesting letter is from a son to a father, both Essex men and both members of the Essex Hunt, written from South Africa during the Boer War, and is a pretty good proof, if any were required, of the spirit that animates the majority of those who follow the hound and horn:—

"Wakkerstroom Camp,
"*April 23rd*, 1900.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—At last the long-looked-for event has come off and we have got fairly up to the enemy, while at the same time 'yours truly' has been under a good hot fire and come out safe and sound.

"On Friday we joined a column under General Rundle, at Edenburg, and marched here, past the place where the Irish Rifles distinguished themselves; we formed the right out-flank of the advance guard, and had gone about four miles when our scouts were fired at, so up the rest of us galloped, 'offed' horses and rushed up a kopje, and got to the top just in time to see about eight or nine Boers, the rearguard of their force, disappearing over the next.

"Our orders were to draw the enemy's fire, if possible, so we pushed on as soon as our horses came up, mounted and galloped after the Boers for about two miles, when we came to a long range of kopjes, up which we climbed, and there the enemy was, right in front of us, about 1,500 yards away.

"Then the fun began, and didn't the bullets whizz around; they make you feel funny at first, but very soon all you think about is to try and get one as near to them as they put theirs to you. We had been at this for about a quarter of an hour when the Boers turned a gun on us, and we had orders to move, so we crept back to our horses and were off; but as soon as we mounted the Boers turned two more pom-poms on us, and we had to gallop as hard as we could; the beggars had the range exact and pitched their shells all amongst us; one fell right between —— and me, and, although it covered us both with dirt, neither us nor our horses were hit. We had about half a mile of this, and the only casualty on our side was one horse wounded. These Boers seemed to be rank bad shots; still, I mustn't brag, as we have got to get through a lot more hot work, and we are only waiting now for French to come up with the cavalry.

"Two of the scouts who are with us have been with Buller since the beginning of the campaign, and they say that they have not been in a hotter place than they were in when out with us on Friday, so we were lucky. It is an experience, and, provided one comes out all right, worth going through; the whistle of the bullets makes you duck at first, but that is of no use really, for the bullet has passed miles away by the time that you have ducked your head.

"I had one awful close shave. We were advancing at the double, when a bullet struck my haversack and tore it open, and sad to say, all my grub and the sleeping cap that mother made me and the 'housewife' that —— made fell out, and I couldn't possibly stop and pick them up, as the bullets were coming much too thick, but I am very sick at losing them, as they are all I have, and I can get no others.

"I have just had a temporary rise from the ranks. At least, I suppose it is intended for a rise, as I have been made General ——'s orderly. Saturday was my first day, and most of it I spent well up in the firing line holding the General's horse and mine, and didn't the bullets come. But, thank God, neither I nor the horses were hit. Sunday was fairly quiet, except for a little sniping. But this morning I had it hot again.

"I had to take an order to the O.C. one of the firing lines, and mounted as I was, and galloping hard, made a fine mark for the Boers, and coming back, they turned a pom-pom full on me. I had about 500 yards of it, and quite enough, thank you. One shot hit my mare, and although it cut her, it fortunately did not stop her galloping. The General saw it all from where he was standing, and looked awfully pleased when I got back safe, and told me that he thought both I and my horse 'must have charmed lives.' I don't know how it was that we both came through so well. I hope my luck will last!

"I am off duty just now for dinner, but as that only consists of one 'dog' biscuit and water it doesn't take long; but I am very fit, and never felt better in my life. I am writing this to catch the mail closing at 4 p.m., and while I write the shells keep whistling overhead from a big gun our artillery can't get at.

"The Boers are wily beasts, they shift their guns about every half-hour, so we can't get much of a 'sitting' shot at any of them, but they get it hot when our shells do get home. I saw six Boers and their horses knocked over by a shell on Saturday, and not one of them got up again. Hunting is all over now, I suppose, and you will just be getting ready for cricket. I almost wish sometimes that I was at home for it, and I am sure that at night I often wish I was in a nice warm bed, for we get it awfully cold now after sundown. A shell has just landed fair in the camp and stampeded a lot of our mules and waggons, and although the niggers are after them, it looks very much as if the whole lot had gone for good!"

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ERRATA—Vol. II.

For Dagenham in these "Leaves" *read* Dagnams. (See note *re* Errata Vol. I.)

For Lankester Springs, p. 104, *read* Lancaster Springs.